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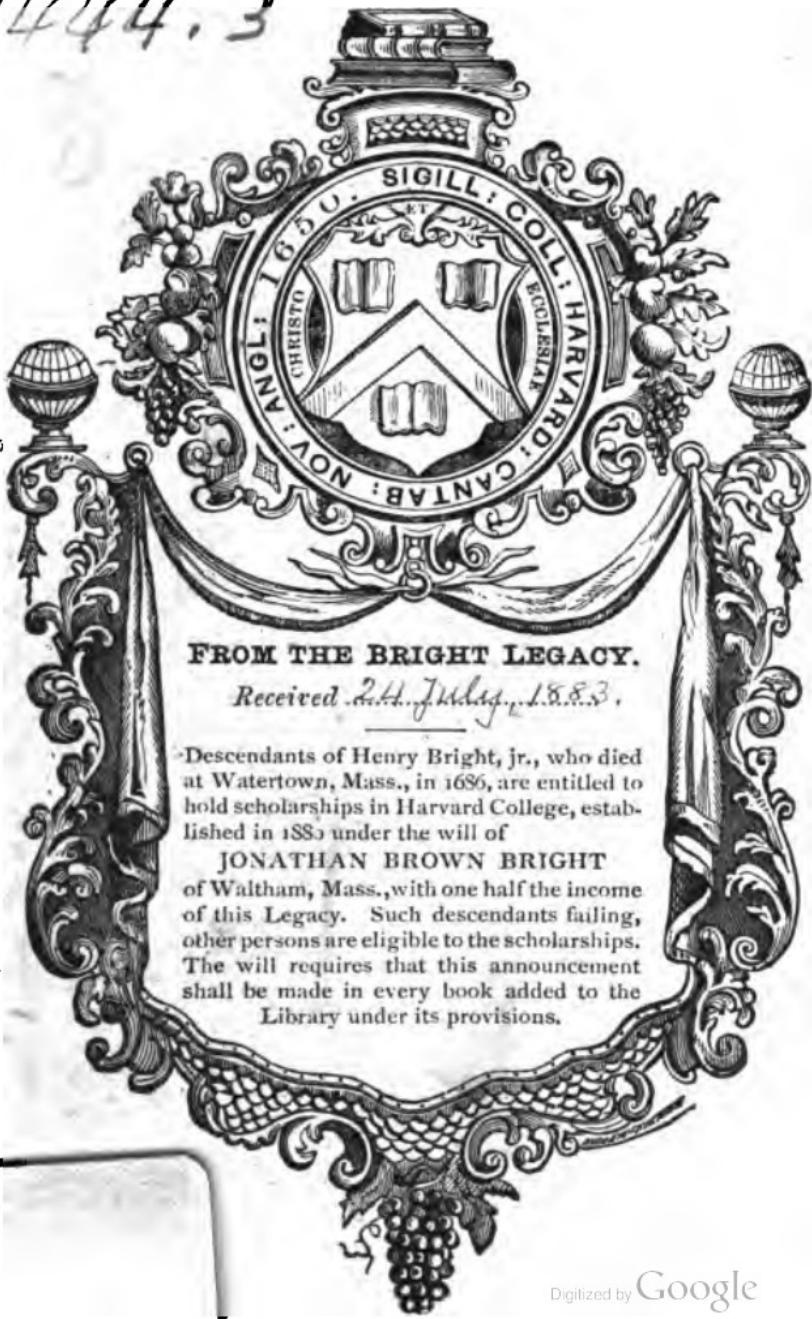
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THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

SWEET AUBURN! loveliest village of the plain;

Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,

Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed :
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn-bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,

Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed ;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired ;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down ;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place ;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please :
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed :
These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green :
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way ;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries ;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;

And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man ;
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more :
His best companions, innocence and health ;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered ; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view

Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs — and God has given my share —
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose :
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;
And, as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return — and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labor with an age of ease ;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 't is hard to combat, learns to fly !
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;
No surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend ;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way ;

And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past !

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below :
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ; —
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring :
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,

And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place ;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain :
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending sweep'd his aged breast ;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire and talked the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe ;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all ;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,

The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place ;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest ;
Their welfare pleased him; and their cares distrest :
To them his heart, his love, his griefs, were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view ;
I knew him well, and every truant knew :
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face ;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper circling round

Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault ;
The village all declared how much he knew :
'T was certain he could write, and cipher too ;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge :
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even though vanquished, he could argue still ;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around ;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where graybeard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place :
The whitewashed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door ;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day ;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen-boughs and flowers and fennel gay ;

While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendors ! could not all
Reprise the tottering mansion from its fall ?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail ;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear ;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train ;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art ;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway ;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed, —
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey

The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'T is yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds :
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth ;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green :
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies ;
While thus the land adorned for pleasure all
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes ;
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.
Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed :
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,

But verging to decline, its splendors rise ;
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise :
 While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
 The mournful peasant leads his humble band,
 And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
 The country blooms — a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah ! where, shall poverty reside,
 To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ?
 If to some common's fenceless limits strayed
 He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
 And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — what waits him there ?
 To see profusion that he must not share ;
 To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
 To pamper luxury, and thin mankind ;
 To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
 Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe.
 Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade ;
 Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
 There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
 The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign
 Here, richly deckt, admits the gorgeous train :
 Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
 The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
 Sure these denote one universal joy !
 Are these thy serious thoughts ? — Ah, turn thine eyes
 Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,

Has wept at tales of innocence distrest ;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn :
Now lost to all ; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, — thine, the loveliest train, —
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain ?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread !

Ah, no ! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed before
The various terrors of that horrid shore ;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around ;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake ;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they ;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.

Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven ! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away ;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep.
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kist her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And claspt them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury ! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee !
How do thy potions, with insidious joy
Diffuse their pleasure only to destroy !
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,

Boast of a florid vigor not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe ;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done ;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there ;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !
Farewell, and oh ! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,

Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime ;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain ;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain ;
Teach him, that states of native strength possest,
Though very poor, may still be very blest ;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labored mole away ;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.





THE ANCIENT MARINER.

BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

I.

Tis an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
“By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp’st thou me ?

“The Bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin ;
The guests are met, the feast is set :
Mayst hear the merry din.”

He holds him with his skinny hand :
“There was a ship,” quoth he.
“Hold off ! unhand me, graybeard loon ! ”
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye, —
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years’ child :
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :
 He cannot chuse but hear ;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

“The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
 Merrily did we drop
 Below the kirk, below the hill,
 Below the lighthouse top.

“The Sun came up upon the left,
 Out of the sea came he !
 And he shone bright, and on the right
 Went down into the sea.

“Higher and higher every day,
 Till over the mast at noon — ”
 The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
 Red as a rose is she ;
 Nodding their heads before her goes
 The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
 Yet he cannot chuse but hear ;
 And thus spake on that ancient man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

“And now the storm-blast came, and he
 Was tyrannous and strong :

He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

"With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

"And through the drifts the snowy cliffs
Did send a dismal sheen :
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around :
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound !

"At length did cross an Albatross.
Thorough the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.

The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through.

“ And a good south-wind sprung up behind ;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners’ hollo !

“ In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine.”

“ God save thee, ancient Mariner !
From the fiends that plague thee thus ! —
Why look’st thou so ? ” — “ With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.”

II.

“ THE Sun now rose upon the right :
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

“ And the good south-wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners’ hollo !

“ And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work ‘em woe :

For all averred, I had killed the bird
 That made the breeze to blow.
 'Ah wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay,
 That made the breeze to blow!'

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head
 The glorious Sun uprist:
 Then all averred, I had killed the bird
 That brought the fog and mist.
 'T was right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,
 That bring the fog and mist.'

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
 The furrow followed free;
 We were the first that ever burst
 Into that silent sea.

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
 'T was sad as sad could be;
 And we did speak only to break
 The silence of the sea!

"All in a hot and copper sky,
 The bloody Sun, at noon,
 Right up above the mast did stand,
 No bigger than the Moon.

"Day after day, day after day,
 We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
 As idle as a painted ship
 Upon a painted ocean.

“ Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

“ The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

“ About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch’s oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

“ And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the spirit that plagued us so ;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

“ And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root ;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

“ Ah ! well-a-day ! what evil looks
Had I from old and young !
Instead ‘of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.”

III.

“ THERE passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time ! a weary time !
How glazed each weary eye,
When, looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

“ At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist ;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

“ A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
And still it neared and neared :
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

“ With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail ;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail ! a sail !

“ With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call :
Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

“ See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
 Hither to work us weal ;
 Without a breeze, without a tide,
 She steadies with upright keel !

“ The western wave was all aflame,
 The day was wellnigh done !
 Almost upon the western wave
 Rested the broad bright Sun ;
 When that strange shape drove suddenly
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

“ And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
 (Heaven’s Mother send us grace !)
 As if through a dungeon grate he peered
 With broad and burning face.

“ Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
 How fast she nears and nears !
 Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
 Like restless gossamer ?

“ Are those her ribs through which the Sun
 Did peer, as through a grate ?
 And is that Woman all her crew ?
 Is that a Death ? and are there two ?
 Is Death that woman’s mate ?

“ Her lips were red, her looks were free,
 Her locks were yellow as gold :
 Her skin was as white as leprosy,
 The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she
 Who thickens man’s blood with cold.

“The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice ;
‘The game is done ! I ‘ve won, I ‘ve won !’
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

“The Sun’s rim dips ; the stars rush out ;
At one stride comes the dark ;
With far-heard whisper o’er the sea
Off shot the spectre-bark.

“We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman’s face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip, —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

“One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

“Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

“The souls did from their bodies fly, —
They fled to bliss or woe !

And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow ! ”

IV.

“ I FEAR thee, ancient Mariner !
I fear thy skinny hand !
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

“ I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.” —
“ Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !
This body dropt not down.

“ Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

“ The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie :
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.

“ I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away ;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

“ I looked to heaven, and tried to pray ;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,

A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

“ I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

“ The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they :
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

“ An orphan’s curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high ;
But oh ! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man’s eye !
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

“ The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide :
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside, —

“ Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread ;
But where the ship’s huge shadow lay,
The charméd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

“ Beyond the shadow of the ship,
 I watched the water-snakes ;
 They moved in tracks of shining white,
 And when they reared, the elfish light
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

“ Within the shadow of the ship
 I watched their rich attire ;
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
 They coiled and swam ; and every track
 Was a flash of golden fire.

“ O happy living things ! no tongue
 Their beauty might declare :
 A spring of love gushed from my heart,
 And I blessed them unaware :
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
 And I blessed them unaware.

“ The selfsame moment I could pray ;
 And from my neck so free
 The Albatross fell off, and sank
 Like lead into the sea.”

V.

“ O SLEEP ! it is a gentle thing,
 Beloved from pole to pole !
 To Mary Queen the praise be given !
 She sent the gentle sleep from heaven,
 That slid into my soul.

“ The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I woke, it rained.

“ My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

“ I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

“ And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

“ The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

“ And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud,
The Moon was at its edge.

“ The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:

Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

“The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on !
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

“They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

“The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ;
Yet never a breeze upblew ;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do ;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools, —
We were a ghastly crew.

“The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me.”

“I fear thee, ancient Mariner ! ”
“Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !
”T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :

“For when it dawned — they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

“Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun ;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

“Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

“And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

“It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

“Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe :
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

“ Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

“ The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean ;
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion, —
Backwards and forwards half her length,
With a short uneasy motion.

“ Then, like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound :
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

“ How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare ;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned,
Two voices in the air.

“ ‘ Is it he ? ’ quoth one, ‘ is this the man ?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

“ The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,

He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

"The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew;
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'"

VI.

FIRST VOICE.

"' But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing, —
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?
What is the ocean doing ?'

SECOND VOICE.

"' Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast ;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast, —

"' If he may know which way to go ;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see ! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE.

"' But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind ?'

SECOND VOICE.

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

" Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
Or we shall be belated :
For slow and slow that ship-will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

" I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather :
'T was night, calm night, the moon was high ;
The dead men stood together.

" All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter :
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

" The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away :
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

" And now this spell was snapt : once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen,—

" Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,

And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

“ But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

“ It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring, —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

“ Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze, —
On me alone it blew.

“ Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

“ We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray, —
O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.

“ The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !

And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

“The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock :
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

“ And the bay was white with silent light,
Till, rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

“ A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were :
I turned my eyes upon the deck,—
O Christ ! what saw I there !

“ Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

“ This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light ;

“ This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart, —
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

“But soon I heard the dash of oars,
 I heard the Pilot’s cheer;
 My head was turned perforce away,
 And I saw a boat appear.

“The Pilot and the Pilot’s boy,
 I heard them coming fast:
 Dear Lord in heaven! it was a joy
 The dead men could not blast.

“I saw a third,—I heard his voice:
 It is the Hermit good!
 He singeth loud his godly hymns
 That he makes in the wood.
 He ’ll shrive my soul, he ’ll wash away
 The Albatross’s blood.”

VII.

“THIS Hermit good lives in that wood
 Which slopes down to the sea.
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
 He loves to talk with marineres
 That come from a far countree.

“He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve,—
 He hath a cushion plump:
 It is the moss that wholly hides
 The rotted old oak stump.

“The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
 ‘Why, this is strange, I trow!

Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now ?'

" ' Strange, by my faith ! ' the Hermit said, —
' And they answered not our cheer.
The planks look warped ! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere !
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

" ' Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along ;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

" ' Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look, —
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared.' — ' Push on, push on ! '
Said the Hermit cheerily.

" The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

" Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread :
It reached the ship, it split the bay :
The ship went down like lead.

“Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat ;
But, swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot’s boat.

“Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round ;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

“I moved my lips, — the Pilot shrieked,
And fell down in a fit ;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

“I took the oars : the Pilot’s boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
‘Ha ! ha !’ quoth he, ‘full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.’

“And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

“‘O shrive me, shrive me, holy man !’
The Hermit crossed his brow.

‘Say quick,’ quoth he, ‘I bid thee say,—
What manner of man art thou?’

“Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

“Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

“I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

“What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bridemaids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer.

“O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely ’t was, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis sweeter far to me,
 To walk together to the kirk
 With a goodly company! —

"To walk together to the kirk,
 And all together pray,
 While each to his great Father bends,
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
 And youths and maidens gay!

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest! —
 He prayeth well, who loveth well
 Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
 All things both great and small;
 For the dear God who loveth us,
 He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
 Whose beard with age is hoar,
 Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
 Turned from the Bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
 And is of sense forlorn:
 A sadder and a wiser man
 He rose the Morrow morn.



THE PRISONER OF CHILLON.

BY LORD BYRON.

I.

MY hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears :
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and barred, — forbidden fare ;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death ;
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake ;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place ;
We were seven — who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,

Finished as they had begun,
 Proud of Persecution's rage ;
 One in fire, and two in field,
 Their belief with blood have sealed,
 Dying as their father died,
 For the God their foes denied ;
 Three were in a dungeon cast,
 Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II.

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
 In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
 There are seven columns, massy and gray,
 Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
 A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
 And through the crevice and the cleft
 Of the thick wall is fallen and left ;
 Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
 Like a marsh's meteor lamp :
 And in each pillar there is a ring,
 And in each ring there is a chain ;
 That iron is a cankering thing,
 For in these limbs its teeth remain,
 With marks that will not wear away,
 Till I have done with this new day,
 Which now is painful to these eyes,
 Which have not seen the sun so rise
 For years, — I cannot count them o'er,
 I lost their long and heavy score
 When my last brother drooped and died,
 And I lay living by his side.

III.

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three, — yet, each alone ;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight :
And thus together, — yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart,
'T was still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold ;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound, — not full and free,
As they of yore were wont to be :
It might be fancy, — but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV.

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do, and did my best, —
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, — with eyes as blue as heaven,

For him my soul was sorely moved ;
 And truly might it be distressed
 To see such bird in such a nest ;
 For he was beautiful as day —
 (When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free) —
 A polar day, which will not see
 A sunset till its summer 's gone,
 Its sleepless summer of long light,
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun :
 And thus he was as pure and bright,
 And in his natural spirit gay,
 With tears for naught but others' ills,
 And then they flowed like mountain rills,
 Unless he could assuage the woe
 Which he abhorred to view below.

v.

The other was as pure of mind,
 But formed to combat with his kind ;
 Strong in his frame, and of a mood
 Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
 And perished in the foremost rank
 With joy : — but not in chains to pine :
 His spirit withered with their clank,
 I saw it silently decline, —
 And so perchance in sooth did mine :
 But yet I forced it on to cheer
 Those relics of a home so dear.
 He was a hunter of the hills,
 Had followed there the deer and wolf ;

To him his dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI.

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls :
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow ;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave entralls :
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made, — and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day ;
Sounding o'er our heads it knocked ;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky ;
And then the very rock hath rocked,
And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food ;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,

And for the like had little care :
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moistened many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow-men
Like brutes within an iron den ;
But what were these to us or him ?
These wasted not his heart or limb ;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side :
But why delay the truth ? — he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead,
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died, — and they unlocked his chain,
And scooped for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begged them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine, — it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer, —
They coldly laughed, — and laid him there :
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love ;

His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument !

VIII.

But he, the favorite and the flower,
Most cherished since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free ;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired, —
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
O God ! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood : —
I 've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I 've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I 've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread ;
But these were horrors, — this was woe
Unmixed with such, — but sure and slow ;
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So fearless, yet so tender — kind,
And grieved for those he left behind ;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom

Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray ;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright ;
And not a word of murmur, — not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence, — lost
In this last loss, of all the most ;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less :
I listened, but I could not hear, —
I called, for I was wild with fear ;
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishéd ;
I called, and thought I heard a sound, —
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rushed to him : — I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived, — *I* only drew
The accuséd breath of dungeon-dew ;
The last — the sole — the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath —
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe :
I took that hand which lay so still,

Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive,—
A frantic feeling when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.

I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope,— but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well,— I never knew,—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling,— none,—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray;
It was not night,— it was not day,—
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness,— without a place;
There were no stars — no earth — no time —
No check — no change — no good — no crime —
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X.

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird ;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery ;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track ;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree ;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me !
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more :
It seemed like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And, cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,

But knowing well captivity,
 Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !
 Or if it were, in wingéd guise,
 A visitant from Paradise ;
 For — Heaven forgive that thought ! the while
 Which made me both to weep and smile —
 I sometimes deemed that it might be
 My brother's soul come down to me ;
 But then at last away it flew,
 And then 't was mortal, — well I knew,
 For he would never thus have flown,
 And left me twice so doubly lone, —
 Lone — as the corse within its shroud,
 Lone — as a solitary cloud,
 A single cloud on a sunny day,
 While all the rest of heaven is clear,
 A frown upon the atmosphere,
 That hath no business to appear
 When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI.

A kind of change came in my fate,
 My keepers grew compassionate ;
 I know not what had made them so,
 They were inured to sights of woe,
 But so it was : — my broken chain
 With links unfastened did remain,
 And it was liberty to stride
 Along my cell from side to side,
 And up and down, and then athwart,

And tread it over every part ;
 And round the pillars one by one,
 Returning where my walk begun,
 Avoiding only, as I trod,
 My brothers' graves without a sod ;
 For if I thought with heedless tread
 My step profaned their lowly bed,
 My breath came gaspingly and thick,
 And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

XII.

I made a footing in the wall,
 It was not therefrom to escape,
 For I had buried one and all
 Who loved me in a human shape ;
 And the whole earth would henceforth be
 A wider prison unto me :
 No child — no sire — no kin had I,
 No partner in my misery ;
 I thought of this, and I was glad,
 For thought of them had made me mad ;
 But I was curious to ascend
 To my barred windows, and to bend
 Once more upon the mountains high
 The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII.

I saw them, — and they were the same,
 They were not changed like me in frame ;
 I saw their thousand years of snow

On high, — their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channelled rock and broken bush ;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down ;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
 The only one in view ;
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
 Of gentle breath and hue.

The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all ;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly ;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled, and would fain
I had not left my recent chain ;
And, when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load ;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save, —
And yet my glance, too much oppress,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV.

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count, — I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise
And clear them of their dreary mote ;
At last men came to set me free ;
I asked not why, and recked not where ;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage, — and all my own !
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home :
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they ?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill, — yet, strange to tell !
In quiet we had learned to dwell, —
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are : — even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.



BINGEN ON THE RHINE.

BY CAROLINE NORTON.

SOUDIER of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was
 dearth of woman's tears;
But a comrade stood beside him, while his life-blood
ebbed away,
And bent, with pitying glances, to hear what he might
say:
The dying soldier faltered, as he took that comrade's
hand,
And he said, "I never more shall see my own, my native
land:
Take a message, and a token to some distant friends of
mine;
For I was born at Bingen,—at Bingen on the Rhine.

"Tell my brothers and companions, when they meet and
crowd around,
To hear my mournful story, in the pleasant vineyard
ground,

That we fought the battle bravely, and when the day was
done
Full many a corse lay ghastly pale beneath the setting
sun;
And 'mid the dead and dying were some grown old in
wars,—
The death-wound on their gallant breasts, the last of
many scars;
And some were young, and suddenly beheld life's morn
decline,—
And one had come from Bingen,—fair Bingen on the
Rhine.

“Tell my mother, that her other son shall comfort her
old age;
For I was still a truant bird, that thought his home a cage.
For my father was a soldier, and even as a child
My heart leaped forth to hear him tell of struggles fierce
and wild;
And when he died, and left us to divide his scanty hoard,
I let them take whate'er they would,—but kept my fa-
ther's sword;
And with boyish love I hung it where the bright light
used to shine,
On the cottage wall at Bingen,—calm Bingen on the
Rhine.

“Tell my sister not to weep for me, and sob with droop-
ing head,
When the troops come marching home again, with glad
and gallant tread,

But to look upon them proudly, with a calm and steadfast
eye,

For her brother was a soldier, too, and not afraid to
die;

And if a comrade seek her love, I ask her in my name,
To listen to him kindly, without regret or shame,
And to hang the old sword in its place (my father's sword
and mine),

For the honor of old Bingen, — dear Bingen on the Rhine.

“There’s another, — not a sister; in the happy days
gone by

You’d have known her by the merriment that sparkled
in her eye;

Too innocent for coquetry, — too fond for idle scorning, —
O friend! I fear the lightest heart makes sometimes
heaviest mourning!

Tell her the last night of my life (for ere the moon be
risen,

My body will be out of pain, my soul be out of prison), —
I dreamed I stood with *her*, and saw the yellow sunlight
shine

On the vine-clad hills of Bingen, — sweet Bingen on the
Rhine.

“I saw the blue Rhine sweep along, — I heard, or seemed
to hear,

The German songs we used to sing in chorus sweet and
clear;

And down the pleasant river, and up the slanting hill,
The echoing chorus sounded through the evening calm
and still;

And her glad blue eyes were on me, as we passed with
friendly talk,
Down many a path beloved of yore, and well-remembered
walk !
And her little hand lay lightly, confidingly in mine,—
But we meet no more at Bingen,— loved Bingen on the
Rhine.”

His trembling voice grew faint and hoarse, — his grasp
was childish weak, —
His eyes put on a dying look, — he sighed and ceased to
speak ;
His comrade bent to lift him, but the spark of life had
fled, —
The soldier of the Legion in a foreign land was dead !
And the soft moon rose up slowly, and calmly she looked
down
On the red sand by the battle-field, with bloody corses
strewn ;
Yes, calmly on that dreadful scene her pale light seemed
to shine,
As it shone on distant Bingen,— fair Bingen on the
Rhine.





O'CONNOR'S CHILD.

BY THOMAS CAMPBELL.

I.

OH! once the harp of Innisfail
Was strung full high to notes of gladness ;
But yet it often told a tale
Of more prevailing sadness.
Sad was the note, and wild its fall,
As winds that moan at night forlorn
Along the isles of Fion-Gall,
When, for O'Connor's child to mourn,
The harper told, how lone, how far
From any mansion's twinkling star,
From any path of social men,
Or voice, but from the fox's den,
The lady in the desert dwelt ;
And yet no wrongs nor fear she felt.
Say, why should dwell in place so wild,
O'Connor's pale and lovely child ?

E

II.

Sweet lady ! she no more inspires
 Green Erin's hearts with beauty's power,
 As in the palace of her sires
 She bloomed a peerless flower.
 Gone from her hand and bosom, gone,
 The royal brooch, the jewelled ring,
 That o'er her dazzling whiteness shone,
 Like dews on lilies of the spring.
 Yet why, though fallen her brother's kerne,
 Beneath De Bourgo's battle stern,
 While yet, in Leinster unexplored,
 Her friends survive the English sword, —
 Why lingers she from Erin's host,
 So far on Galway's shipwrecked coast ?
 Why wanders she a huntress wild, —
 O'Connor's pale and lovely child ?

III.

And, fixed on empty space, why burn
 Her eyes with momentary wildness ;
 And wherefore do they then return
 To more than woman's mildness ?
 Dishevelled are her raven locks ;
 On Connacht Moran's name she calls ;
 And oft amidst the lonely rocks
 She sings sweet madrigals.
 Placed in the foxglove and the moss,
 Behold a parted warrior's cross !
 That is the spot where, evermore,
 The lady, at her shieling door,

Enjoys that, in communion sweet,
 The living and the dead can meet ;
For lo ! to love-lorn fantasy,
 The hero of her heart is nigh.

IV.

Bright as the bow that spans the storm,
 In Erin's yellow vesture clad,
 A son of light, a lovely form,
 He comes and makes her glad :
 Now on the grass-green turf he sits,
 His tasselled horn beside him laid ;
 Now o'er the hills in chase he flits,
 The hunter and the deer a shade !
 Sweet mourner ! those are shadows vain,
 That cross the twilight of her brain ;
 Yet she will tell you she is blest,
 Of Connacht Moran's tomb possessed,
 More richly than in Aghrim's bower,
 When bards high praised her beauty's power,
 And kneeling pages offered up
 The morat in a golden cup.

V.

“A hero's bride ! this desert bower,
 It ill befits thy gentle breeding.
 And wherefore dost thou love this flower
 To call ‘My love lies bleeding’ ? ”
 “This purple flower my tears have nursed, —
 A hero's blood supplied its bloom :
 I love it, for it was the first

That grew on Connacht Moran's tomb.
O, hearken, stranger, to my voice !
This desert mansion is my choice ;
And blest, though fatal, be the star
That led me to its wilds afar.
For here these pathless mountains free
Gave shelter to my love and me ;
And every rock and every stone
Bare witness that he was my own.

VI.

“ O'Connor's child, I was the bud
Of Erin's royal tree of glory ;
But woe to them that wrapt in blood
The tissue of my story !
Still, as I clasp my burning brain,
A death-scene rushes on my sight ;
It rises o'er and o'er again,—
The bloody feud, the fatal night,
When, chafing Connacht Moran's scorn,
They called my hero basely born,
And bade him choose a meaner bride
Than from O'Connor's house of pride. . .
Their tribe, they said, their high degree,
Was sung in Tara's psaltery ;
Witness their Eath's victorious brand,
And Cathal of the bloody hand.
Glory (they said) and power and honor
Were in the mansion of O'Connor ;
But he, my loved one, bore in field
A meaner crest upon his shield.

VII.

“ Ah ! brothers, what did it avail,
That fiercely and triumphantly
Ye fought the English of the Pale,
And stemmed De Bourgo’s chivalry ?
And what was it to love and me,
That barons by your standard rode,
Or beal-fires for your jubilee
Upon a hundred mountains glowed ?
What though the lords of tower and dome
From Shannop to the North Sea foam, —
Thought ye your iron hands of pride
Could break the knot that love had tied ?
No — let the eagle change his plume,
The leaf its hue, the flower its bloom ;
But ties around this heart were spun
That could not, would not, be undone !

VIII.

“ At bleating of the wild watch-fold,
Thus sang my love : ‘ O, come with me !
Our bark is on the lake, behold !
Our steeds are fastened to the tree.
Come far from Castle-Connor’s clans,
Come with thy belted forestere ;
And I, beside the lake of swans,
Shall hunt for thee the fallow deer,
And build thy hut, and bring thee home
The wild-fowl and the honeycomb,
And berries from the wood provide,
And play my clarshech by thy side.

Then come, my love ! ' How could I stay ?
 Our nimble stag-hounds tracked the way,
 And I pursued, by moonless skies,
 The light of Connacht Moran's eyes.

IX.

" And fast and far, before the star
 Of day-spring, rushed we through the glade,
 And saw at dawn the lofty bawn
 Of Castle Connor fade.
 Sweet was to us the hermitage
 Of this unploughed, untrodden shore ;
 Like birds all joyous from the cage,
 For man's neglect we loved it more.
 And well he knew, my huntsman dear,
 To search the game with hawk and spear ;
 While I, his evening food to dress,
 Would sing to him in happiness.
 But O, that midnight of despair !
 When I was doomed to rend my hair, —
 The night, to me, of shrieking sorrow !
 The night, to him, that had no morrow !

X.

" When all was hushed, at even-tide
 I heard the baying of their beagle.
 ' Be hushed ! ' my Connacht Moran cried ;
 ' T is but the screaming of the eagle.'
 Alas ! 't was not the eyrie's sound ;
 Their bloody bands had tracked us out.

Up listening starts our couchant hound, —
 And hark ! again, that nearer shout
 Brings faster on the murderers.
 Spare — spare him ! Brazil — Desmond fierce !
 In vain ! — no voice the adder charms.
 Their weapons crossed my sheltering arms ;
 Another's sword has laid him low —
 Another's, and another's ;
 And every hand that dealt the blow —
 Ah me ! it was a brother's.
 Yes, when his moanings died away,
 Their iron hands had dug the clay,
 And o'er his burial-turf they trod ;
 And I beheld — O God ! O God ! —
 His life-blood oozing from the sod.

XI.

“ Warm in his death-wounds sepulchred,
 Alas ! my warrior's spirit brave
 Nor mass nor ulla-lulla heard,
 Lamenting, soothe his grave.
 Dragged to their hated mansion back,
 How long in thraldom's grasp I lay
 I knew not, for my soul was black,
 And knew no change of night or day.
 One night of horror round me grew ;
 Or if I saw, or felt, or knew,
 'T was but when those grim visages,
 The angry brothers of my race,
 Glared on each eyeball's aching throb,
 And checked my bosom's power to sob,

Or when my heart, with pulses drear,
Beat like a death-watch to my ear.

XII.

“ But Heaven, at last, my soul’s eclipse
Did with a vision bright inspire :
I woke, and felt upon my lips
A prophetess’s fire.
Thrice in the east a war-drum beat, —
I heard the Saxon’s trumpet sound,
And ranged, as to the judgment-seat,
My guilty, trembling brothers round.
Clad in the helm and shield they came ;
For now De Bourgo’s sword and flame
Had ravaged Ulster’s boundaries,
And lighted up the midnight skies.
The standard of O’Connor’s sway
Was in the turret where I lay ;
That standard, with so dire a look,
As ghastly shone the moon and pale,
I gave, that every bosom shook
Beneath its iron mail.

XIII.

“ ‘ And go ! ’ I cried, ‘ the combat seek,
Ye hearts that unappalléd bore
The anguish of a sister’s shriek,
Go ! — and return no more !
For sooner guilt the ordeal brand
Shall grasp unhurt, than ye shall hold
The banner with victorious hand,

Beneath a sister's curse unrolled.
 O stranger, by my country's loss !
 And by my love ! and by the cross !
 I swear I never could have spoke
 The curse that severed nature's yoke,
 But that a spirit o'er me stood,
 And fired me with the wrathful mood ;
 And frenzy to my heart was given,
 To speak the malison of Heaven.

XIV.

"They would have crossed themselves, all mute;
 They would have prayed to burst the spell ;
 But at the stamping of my foot,
 Each hand down powerless fell.
 'And go to Athunree !' I cried,
 'High lift the banner of your pride !
 But know that where its sheet unrolls,
 The weight of blood is on your souls !
 Go where the havoc of your kerne
 Shall float as high as mountain fern !
 Men shall no more your mansion know ;
 The nettles on your hearth shall grow ;
 Dead, as the green oblivious flood
 That mantles by your walls, shall be
 The glory of O'Connor's blood !
 Away ! away to Athunree !
 Where, downward when the sun shall fall,
 The raven's wing shall be your pall :
 And not a vassal shall unlace
 The vizor from your dying face !'

XV.

"A bolt that overhung our dome,
 Suspended till my curse was given,
 Soon as it passed these lips of foam,
 Pealed in the blood-red heaven.
 Dire was the look that o'er their backs
 The angry parting brothers threw ;
 But now, behold ! like cataracts,
 Come down the hills in view
 O'Connor's pluméd partisans :
 Thrice ten Kilnagorvian clans
 Were marching to their doom.
 A sudden storm their plumage tossed,
 A flash of lightning o'er them crossed,
 And all again was gloom.

XVI.

"Stranger, I fled the home of grief,
 At Connacht Moran's tomb to fall.
 I found the helmet of my chief,
 His bow still hanging on our wall,
 And took it down, and vowed to rove
 This desert place a huntress bold ;
 Nor would I change my buried love
 For any heart of living mould.
 No ! for I am a hero's child ;
 I 'll hunt my quarry in the wild ;
 And still my home this mansion make,
 Of all unheeded and unheeding ;
 And cherish, for my warrior's sake,
 The flower of 'love lies bleeding.' "



KILMENY.

BY JAMES HOGG.

BONNY Kilmeny gaed up the glen ;
But it wasna to meet Duneira's men,
Nor the rosy monk of the isle to see,
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
It was only to hear the yorlir sing,
And pu' the cress-flower round the spring, —
The scarlet hypp, and the hind-berry,
And the nut that hung frae the hazel-tree ;
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
But lang may her minny look o'er the wa',
And lang may she seek i' the greenwood shaw ;
Lang the laird of Duneira blame,
And lang, lang greet or Kilmeny come hame.

When many a day had come and fled,
When grief grew calm, and hope was dead,
When mass for Kilmeny's soul had been sung,
When the bedes-man had prayed, and the dead-bell rung;
Late, late in a gloamin', when all was still,
When the fringe was red on the westlin hill,

The wood was sere, the moon i' the wane,
 The reek o' the cot hung over the plain,—
 Like a little wee cloud in the world its lane ;
 When the ingle lowed with an eiry leme,
 Late, late in the gloamin' Kilmeny came hame !

“ Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been ?
 Lang hae we sought both holt and den, —
 By linn, by ford, and greenwood tree ;
 Yet you are halesome and fair to see.
 Where got you that joup o' the lily sheen ?
 That bonny snood of the birk sae green ?
 And these roses, the fairest that ever was seen ?
 Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been ? ”

Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace,
 But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny's face ;
 As still was her look, and as still was her ee,
 As the stillness that lay on the emerant lea,
 Or the mist that sleeps on a waveless sea.
 For Kilmeny had been she knew not where,
 And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare ;
 Kilmény had been where the cock never crew,
 Where the rain never fell, and the wind never blew ;
 But it seemed as the harp of the sky had rung,
 And the airs of heaven played round her tongue,
 When she spake of the lovely forms she had seen,
 And a land where sin had never been, —
 A land of love, and a land of light,
 Withouten sun, or moon, or night ;
 Where the river swa'd a living stream,

And the light a pure celestial beam :
 The land of vision it would seem,
 A still, and everlasting dream.

In yon greenwood there is a waik,
 And in that waik there is a wene,
 And in that wene there is a maike,
 That neither has flesh, blood, nor bane ;
 And down in yon greenwood he walks his lane.

In that green wene Kilmeny lay,
 Her bosom happed wi' the flowerets gay ;
 But the air was soft, and the silence deep,
 And bonny Kilmeny fell sound asleep ;
 She kend nae mair, nor opened her ee,
 Till waked by the hymns of a far countrie.

She 'wakened on a couch of the silk sae slim,
 All striped wi' the bars of the rainbow's rim ;
 And lovely beings around were rife,
 Who erst had travelled mortal life ;
 And aye they smiled, and 'gan to speer :
 " What spirit has brought this mortal here ! "

" Lang have I journeyed the world wide,"
 A meek and reverend fere replied ;
 " Baith night and day I have watched the fair
 Eident a thousand years and mair.
 Yes, I have watched o'er ilk degree,
 Wherever blooms femenitye ;
 But sinless virgin, free of stain,
 In mind and body, fand I nane.

Never, since the banquet of time,
 Found I a virgin in her prime,
 Till late this bonny maiden I saw,
 As spotless as the morning snaw.
 Full twenty years she has lived as free
 As the spirits that sojourn in this countrye.
 I have brought her away frae the snares of men,
 That sin or death she may never ken.”

They clasped her waist and her hands sae fair ;
 They kissed her cheek, and they kemed her hair ;
 And round came many a blooming fere,
 Saying, “ Bonny Kilmeny, ye ’re welcome here ;
 Women are freed of the littand scorn ;
 O, blest be the day Kilmeny was born !
 Now shall the land of the spirits see,
 Now shall it ken, what a woman may be !
 Many a lang year in sorrow and pain,
 Many a lang year through the world we ’ve gane,
 Commissioned to watch fair womankind,
 For it ’s they who nurice the immortal mind.
 We have watched their steps as the dawning shone,
 And deep in the greenwood walks alone ;
 By lily bower and silken bed
 The viewless tears have o’er them shed ;
 Have soothed their ardent minds to sleep,
 Or left the couch of love to weep.
 We have seen ! we have seen ! but the time must come,
 And the angels will weep at the day of doom !

“ O, would the fairest of mortal kind
 Aye keep the holy truths in mind,

That kindred spirits their motions see,
 Who watch their ways with anxious ee,
 And grieve for the guilt of humanitye !
 O, sweet to Heaven the maiden's prayer,
 And the sigh that heaves a bosom sae fair !
 And dear to Heaven the words of truth
 And the praise of virtue frae beauty's mouth !
 And dear to the viewless forms of air,
 The minds that kythe as the body fair !

"O, bonny Kilmeny ! free frae stain,
 If ever you seek the world again,—
 That world of sin, of sorrow and fear,—
 O, tell of the joys that are waiting here ;
 And tell of the signs you shall shortly see ;
 Of the times that are now, and the times that shall be."

They lifted Kilmeny, they led her away,
 And she walked in the light of a sunless day ;
 The sky was a dome of crystal bright,
 The fountain of vision, and fountain of light ;
 The emerald fields were of dazzling glow,
 And the flowers of everlasting blow.
 Then deep in the stream her body they laid,
 That her youth and beauty never might fade ;
 And they smiled on heaven, when they saw her lie
 In the stream of life that wandered by.
 And she heard a song, — she heard it sung,
 She kend not where ; but sae sweetly it rung,
 It fell on her ear like a dream of the morn, —

“ Oh ! blest be the day Kilmeny was born !
 Now shall the land of the spirits see,
 Now shall it ken, what a woman may be !
 The sun that shines on the world sae bright,
 A borrowed gлиed frae the fountain of light ;
 And the moon that sleeks the sky sae dun,
 Like a gouden bow, or a beamless sun, —
 Shall wear away, and be seen nae mair ;
 And the angels shall miss them, travelling the air.
 But lang, lang after baith night and day,
 When the sun and the world have dyed away,
 When the sinner has gane to his waesome doom,
 Kilmeny shall smile in eternal bloom ! ”

They bore her away, she wist not how,
 For she felt not arm nor rest below ;
 But so swift they waned her through the light,
 'T was like the motion of sound or sight ;
 They seemed to split the gales of air,
 And yet nor gale nor breeze was there.
 Unnumbered groves below them grew ;
 They came, they passed, and backward flew,
 Like floods of blossoms gliding on,
 In moment seen, in moment gone.
 O, never vales to mortal view
 Appeared like those o'er which they flew,
 That land to human spirits given,
 The lowermost vales of the storied heaven ;
 From whence they can view the world below,
 And heaven's blue gates with sapphires glow, —
 More glory yet unmeet to know.

They bore her far to a mountain green,
To see what mortal never had seen ;
And they seated her high on a purple sward,
And bade her heed what she saw and heard,
And note the changes the spirits wrought ;—
For now she lived in the land of thought.—
She looked, and she saw nor sun nor skies,
But a crystal dome of a thousand dies ;
She looked, and she saw nae land aright,
But an endless whirl of glory and light ;
And radiant beings went and came,
Far swifter than wind, or the linkéd flame ;
She hid her een frae the dazzling view ;
She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw a sun on a summer sky,
And clouds of amber sailing by ;
A lovely land beneath her lay,
And that land had glens and mountains gray ;
And that land had valleys and hoary piles,
And marléd seas, and a thousand isles ;
Its fields were speckled, its forests green,
And its lakes were all of the dazzling sheen,
Like magic mirrors, where slumbering lay
The sun and the sky and the cloudlet gray,
Which heaved and trembled, and gently swung ;
On every shore they seemed to be hung ;
For there they were seen on their downward plain
A thousand times and a thousand again ;
In winding lake and placid firth,—
Little peaceful heavens in the bosom of earth.

Kilmeny sighed and seemed to grieve,
 For she found her heart to that land did cleave ;
 She saw the corn wave on the vale ;
 She saw the deer run down the dale ;
 She saw the plaid and the broad claymore,
 And the brows that the badge of freedom bore ;
 And she thought she had seen the land before.

She saw a lady sit on a throne,
 The fairest that ever the sun shone on !
 A lion licked her hand of milk,
 And she held him in a leish of silk,
 And a leifu' maiden stood at her knee,
 With a silver wand and melting ee, —
 Her sovereign shield, till love stole in,
 And poisoned all the fount within.

Then a gruff, untoward bedes-man came,
 And hundit the lion on his dame ;
 And the guardian maid wi' the dauntless ee,
 She dropped a tear, and left her knee ;
 And she saw till the queen frae the lion fled,
 Till the bonniest flower of the world lay dead ;
 A coffin was set on a distant plain,
 And she saw the red blood fall like rain.
 Then bonny Kilmeny's heart grew sair,
 And she turned away and could look nae mair.

Then the gruff, grim carle girnéd amain,
 And they trampled him down, — but he rose again ;
 And he baited the lion to deeds of weir,
 Till he lapped the blood to the kingdom dear;

And, weening his head was danger preef
 When crowned with the rose and clover-leaf,
 He growled at the carle, and chased him away
 To feed wi' the deer on the mountain gray.
 He growled at the carle, and he gecked at heaven;
 But his mark was set, and his arles given.
 Kilmeny awhile her een withdrew;
 She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw below her, fair unfurled,
 One half of all the glowing world,
 Where oceans rolled and rivers ran,
 To bound the aims of sinful man.
 She saw a people fierce and fell,
 Burst frae their bounds like fiends of hell;
 There lilies grew, and the eagle flew;
 And she herked on her ravening crew,
 Till the cities and towers were wrapt in a blaze,
 And the thunder it roared o'er the lands and the seas.
 The widows they wailed, and the red blood ran,
 And she threatened an end to the race of man.
 She never lened, nor stood in awe,
 Till caught by the lion's deadly paw.
 Oh ! then the eagle swinked for life,
 And brainzelled up a mortal strife;
 But flew she north, or flew she south,
 She met wi' the growl of the lion's mouth.

With a mooted wing and waefu' maen,
 The eagle sought her eyry again;
 But lang may she cower in her bloody nest,
 And lang, lang sleek her wounded breast,

Before she sey another flight,
To play wi' the norland lion's might.

But to sing the sights Kilmeny saw,
So far surpassing Nature's law,
The singer's voice wad sink away,
And the string of his harp wad cease to play.
But she saw till the sorrows of man were by,
And all was love and harmony ;
Till the stars of heaven fell calmly away,
Like the flakes of snaw on a winter's day.

Then Kilmeny begged again to see
The friends she had left in her own countrye,
To tell of the place where she had been,
And the glories that lay in the land unseen ;
To warn the living maidens fair,
The loved of heaven, the spirits' care,
That all whose minds unmeled remain
Shall bloom in beauty when time is gane.

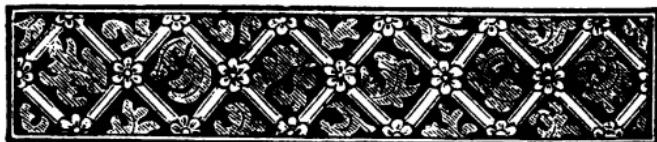
With distant music, soft and deep,
They lulled Kilmeny sound asleep ;
And when she awakened, she lay her lane,
All happed with flowers in the greenwood wene.
When seven long years had come and fled ;
When grief was calm, and hope was dead ;
When scarce was remembered Kilmeny's name,
Late, late in a gloamin, Kilmeny came hame !
And O, her beauty was fair to see,
But still and steadfast was her ee !

Such beauty bard may never declare,
 For there was no pride nor passion there ;
And the soft desire of maidens' een,
In that mild face could never be seen.
 Her seymar was the lily flower,
 And her cheek the moss-rose in the shower ;
 And her voice like the distant melodye
 That floats along the twilight sea.
 But she loved to raike the lanely glen,
 And keeped afar frae the haunts of men ;
 Her holy hymns unheard to sing,
 To suck the flowers and drink the spring.
 But wherever her peaceful form appeared,
 The wild beasts of the hills were cheered !
 The wolf played blythely round the field,
 The lordly byson lowed and kneeled ;
 The dun deer wooed with manner bland,
 And cowered aneath her lily hand.
 And when at even the woodlands rung,
 When hymns of other worlds she sung
 In ecstasy of sweet devotion,
 O, then the glen was all in motion !
 The wild beasts of the forest came,
 Broke from their bughts and faulds the tame,
 And goved around, charmed and amazed ;
 Even the dull cattle crooned and gazed,
 And murmured and looked with anxious pain,
 For something the mystery to explain.
 The buzzard came with the throstle-cock,
 The corby left her houf in the rock ;
 The blackbird alang wi' the eagle flew ;

The hind came tripping o'er the dew ;
The wolf and the kid their raike began ;
And the tod, and the lamb, and the leveret ran ;
The hawk and the hern attour them hung,
And the merl and the mavis forhooyed their young ;
And all in a peaceful ring were hurled :
It was like an eve in a sinless world !

When a month and day had come and gane,
Kilmeny sought the greenwood wene ;
There laid her down on the leaves sae green,
And Kilmeny on earth was never mair seen.
But O, the words that fell from her mouth,
Were words of wonder, and words of truth !
But all the land were in fear and dread,
For they kend na whether she was living or dead.
It wasna her hame, and she couldna remain ;
She left this world of sorrow and pain,
And returned to the land of thought again.





THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM.

BY THOMAS HOOD.

A WAS in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
And four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school;
There were some that ran and some that leapt,
Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gamesome minds
And souls untouched by sin;
To a level mead they came, and there
They drove the wickets in:
Pleasantly shone the setting sun
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they coursed about,
And shouted as they ran, —
Turning to mirth all things of earth,
As only boyhood can;
But the usher sat remote from all,
A melancholy man!

His hat was off, his vest apart,
 To catch heaven's blessed breeze ;
 For a burning thought was in his brow,
 And his bosom ill at ease ;
 So he leaned his head on his hands, and read
 The book between his knees !

Leaf after leaf he turned it o'er,
 Nor ever glanced aside ;
 For the peace of his soul he read that book
 In the golden eventide ;
 Much study had made him very lean,
 And pale, and leaden-eyed.

At last he shut the ponderous tome ;
 With a fast and fervent grasp
 He strained the dusky covers close,
 And fixed the brazen hasp :
 " O God ! could I so close my mind,
 And clasp it with a clasp ! "

Then leaping on his feet upright,
 Some moody turns he took, —
 Now up the mead, then down the mead,
 And past a shady nook, —
 And, lo ! he saw a little boy
 That pored upon a book !

" My gentle lad, what is 't you read, —
 Romance or fairy fable ?
 Or is it some historic page,
 Of kings and crowns unstable ? "

The young boy gave an upward glance,—
“It is ‘The Death of Abel.’”

The usher took six hasty strides,
As smit with sudden pain,—
Six hasty strides beyond the place,
Then slowly back again;
And down he sat beside the lad,
And talked with him of Cain;

And, long since then, of bloody men,
Whose deeds tradition saves;
And lonely folk cut off unseen,
And hid in sudden graves;
And horrid stabs, in groves forlorn,
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injured men
Shriek upward from the sod;
Ay, how the ghostly hand will point
To show the burial clod;
And unknown facts of guilty acts
Are seen in dreams from God!

He told how murderers walk the earth
Beneath the curse of Cain,—
With crimson clouds before their eyes,
And flames about their brain;
For blood has left upon their souls
Its everlasting stain!

“ And well,” quoth he, “ I know, for truth,
 Their pangs must be extreme,—
 Woe, woe, unutterable woe,—
 Who spill life’s sacred stream !
 For why ? Methought, last night I wrought
 A murder, in a dream !

“ One that had never done me wrong,—
 A feeble man and old ;
 I led him to a lonely field,—
 The moon shone clear and cold :
 Now here, said I, this man shall die,
 And I will have his gold !

“ Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,
 And one with a heavy stone,
 One hurried gash with a hasty knife,—
 And then the deed was done :
 There was nothing lying at my feet
 But lifeless flesh and bone !

“ Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
 That could not do me ill ;
 And yet I feared him all the more,
 For lying there so still :
 There was a manhood in his look,
 That murder could not kill !

“ And, lo ! the universal air
 Seemed lit with ghastly flame ;—
 Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes
 Were looking down in blame ;

I took the dead man by his hand,
And called upon his name !

“ O God ! it made me quake to see
Such sense within the slain !
But when I touched the lifeless clay,
The blood gushed out amain !
For every clot a burning spot
Was scorching in my brain !

“ My head was like an ardent coal, —
My heart as solid ice ;
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,
Was at the Devil’s price.
A dozen times I groaned, — the dead
Had never groaned but twice !

“ And now, from forth the frowning sky,
From the heaven’s topmost height,
I heard a voice, — the awful voice
Of the blood-avenging sprite :
‘ Thou guilty man ! take up thy dead,
And hide it from my sight ! ’

“ And I took the dreary body up,
And cast it in a stream, —
The sluggish water, black as ink,
The depth was so extreme :
My gentle boy, remember ! this
Is nothing but a dream !

“Down went the corse with a hollow plunge,
 And vanished in the pool ;
Anon I cleansed my bloody hands,
 And washed my forehead cool,
And sat among the urchins young,
 That evening in the school.

“O Heaven ! to think of their white souls,
 And mine so black and grim !
I could not share in childish prayer,
 Nor join in evening hymn ;
Like a devil of the pit I seemed,
 ‘Mid holy cherubim !

“And peace went with them, one and all,
 And each calm pillow spread ;
But Guilt was my grim chamberlain,
 That lighted me to bed,
And drew my midnight curtains round
 With fingers bloody red !

“All night I lay in agony,
 In anguish dark and deep ;
My fevered eyes I dared not close,
 But stared aghast at Sleep ;
For Sin had rendered unto her
 The keys of hell to keep !

“All night I lay in agony,
 From weary chime to chime ;
With one besetting horrid hint,
 That racked me all the time, —

A mighty yearning, like the first
Fierce impulse unto crime,—

“ One stern tyrannic thought, that made
All other thoughts its slave !
Stronger and stronger every pulse
Did that temptation crave, —
Still urging me to go and see
The dead man in his grave !

“ Heavily I rose up, as soon
As light was in the sky,
And sought the black accurséd pool
With a wild misgiving eye ;
And I saw the dead in the river-bed,
For the faithless stream was dry.

“ Merrily rose the lark, and shook
The dew-drop from its wing ;
But I never marked its morning flight, —
I never heard it sing ;
For I was stooping once again
Under the horrid thing.

“ With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,
I took him up and ran ;
There was no time to dig a grave
Before the day began, —
In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,
I hid the murdered man !

“ And all that day I read in school,
 But my thought was otherwhere ;
 As soon as the mid-day task was done,
 In secret I was there, —
 And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,
 And still the corse was bare !

“ Then down I cast me on my face,
 And first began to weep,
 For I knew my secret then was one
 That earth refused to keep, —
 Or land or sea, though he should be
 Ten thousand fathoms deep.

“ So wills the fierce avenging sprite,
 Till blood for blood atones !
 Ay, though he’s buried in a cave,
 And trodden down with stones,
 And years have rotted off his flesh, —
 The world shall see his bones !

“ O God ! that horrid, horrid dream
 Besets me now awake !
 Again, — again, with dizzy brain,
 The human life I take ;
 And my red right hand grows raging hot,
 Like Cranmer’s at the stake.

“ And still no peace for the restless clay
 Will wave or mould allow ;

The horrid thing pursues my soul,—
It stands before me now! ”

The fearful boy looked up, and saw
Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night, while gentle Sleep
The urchin's eyelids kissed,
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn
Through the cold and heavy mist;
And Eugene Aram walked between,
With gyves upon his wrist.





LADY BARBARA.

BY ALEXANDER SMITH.

GEARL GAWAIN wooed the Lady Barbara,—
High-thoughted Barbara, so white and cold!
'Mong broad-branched beeches in the summer
shaw,
In soft green light his passion he has told.
When rain-beat winds did shriek across the wold,
The Earl to take her fair reluctant ear
Framed passion-trembled ditties manifold;
Silent she sat his amorous breath to hear,
With calm and steady eyes, her heart was otherwhere.

He sighed for her through all the summer weeks;
Sitting beneath a tree whose fruitful boughs
Bore glorious apples with smooth-shining cheeks,
Earl Gawain came and whispered, "Lady, rouse!
Thou art no vestal held in holy vows,
Out with our falcons to the pleasant heath."
Her father's blood leapt up unto her brows,—
He who, exulting on the trumpet's breath,
Came charging like a star across the lists of death,

Trembled, and passed before her high rebuke ;
 And then she sat, her hands clasped round her knee ;
 Like one far-thoughted was the lady's look,
 For in a morning cold as misery
 She saw a lone ship sailing on the sea ;
 Before the north 't was driven like a cloud,
 High on the poop a man sat mournfully :
 The wind was whistling thorough mast and shroud,
 And to the whistling wind thus did he sing aloud :

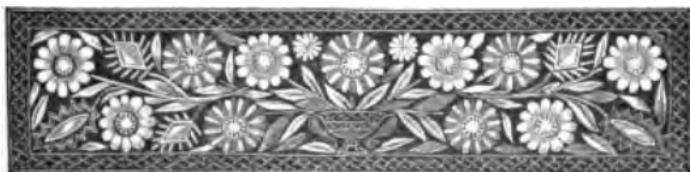
“ Didst look last night upon my native vales,
 Thou Sun, that from the drenching sea hast clomb ?
 Ye demon winds, that glut my gaping sails,
 Upon the salt sea must I ever roam,
 Wander forever on the barren foam ?
 O happy are ye, resting mariners !
 O Death, that thou wouldest come and take me home !
 A hand unseen this vessel onward steers,
 And onward I must float through slow moon-measured
 years.

“ Ye winds ! when like a curse ye drove us on,
 Frothing the waters, and along our way,
 Nor cape, nor headland, through red mornings shone,
 One wept aloud, one shuddered down to pray,
 One howled, ‘ Upon the deep we are astray.’
 On our wild hearts, his words fell like a blight ;
 In one short hour my hair was stricken gray,
 For all the crew sank ghastly in my sight
 As we went driving on through the cold starry night.

“ Madness fell on me in my loneliness,
 The sea foamed curses, and the reeling sky
 Became a dreadful face which did oppress
 Me with the weight of its unwinking eye.
 It fled, when I burst forth into a cry,—
 A shoal of fiends came on me from the deep,
 I hid, but in all corners they did pry,
 And dragged me forth, and round did dance and leap;
 They mouthed on me in dream, and tore me from sweet
 sleep.

“ Strange constellations burned above my head,
 Strange birds around the vessel shrieked and flew,
 Strange shapes, like shadows, through the clear sea fled,
 As our lone ship, wide-winged, came rippling through,
 Angering to foam the smooth and sleeping blue.”
 The lady sighed, “ Far, far upon the sea,
 My own Sir Arthur, could I die with you !
 The wind blows shrill between my love and me.”
 Fond heart ! the space between was but the apple-tree.

There was a cry of joy ; with seeking hands
 She fled to him, like worn bird to her nest ;
 Like washing water on the figured sands,
 His being came and went in sweet unrest,
 As from the mighty shelter of his breast
 The Lady Barbara her head uprears
 With a wan smile, “ Methinks I ’m but half blest ;
 Now when I ’ve found thee, after weary years,
 I cannot see thee, love ! so blind I am with tears.”



THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

I.

SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
And the Spirit of Love fell everywhere,
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss,
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odor, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers, and the tulip tall,
 And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
 Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
 Till they die of their own dear loveliness.

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
 Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
 That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
 Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
 Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
 Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
 It was felt like an odor within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,
 Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
 Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
 The soul of her beauty and love lay bare;

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
 As a Mænad, its moonlight-colored cup,
 Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
 Gazed through the clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tube-rose,
 The sweetest flower for scent that blows; —
 And all rare blossoms, from every clime,
 Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
 Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,

With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells,
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flow'rets which, drooping as day drooped too,
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odor its neighbor shed,

Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear,
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant, which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver, —

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower ;
Radiance and odor are not its dower ;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the beautiful.

The light winds, which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings ;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar ;

The pluméd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odor, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass ;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears ;

The quivering vapors of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odor, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream ; —

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,
And the earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were
drowned

In an ocean of dreams without a sound,
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness,

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant,)

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
Up-gathered into the bosom of rest ;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favorite,
Cradled within the embrace of night.

II.

THERE was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden, a ruling grace

Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind,
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even ;
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the earth.

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise :

As if some bright spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake ;
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed.
You might hear, by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and the going of the wind
Brought pleasure there, and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet ;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam ;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier bands ;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof, —

In a basket of grasses and wild-flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull,
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beam-like ephemeris,
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an ante-natal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,

She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of summer tide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown — she died.

III.

THREE days the flowers of the garden fair
Like stars when the moon is awakened were,
Or the waves of the Baïæ, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low, —

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank.

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass ;
From their sighs the winds caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul ;

Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
And frost in the midst of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf after leaf, day by day,
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed ;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingéd seeds
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set ;

And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks
Were bent and tangled across the walks,
And the leafless network of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin, and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpos, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics and fungi, with mildew and mould,
Started like mist from the wet ground cold ;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated.

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb ;
And, at its outlet, flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapors arose which have strength to kill ;
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen ; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn ;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore,
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came : the wind was his whip ;
One choppy finger was on his lip :
He had torn the cataracts from the hills,
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles ;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound ;
He came, fiercely driven in his chariot throne
By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath :

Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost.

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want :
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air,
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain,
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again ;
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew ;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelled a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone, and spring came back,
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck ;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and dars-
nels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION.

WHETHER the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat,
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess ; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of a dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant, if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odors there,
In truth have never passed away ;
'T is we, 't is ours, are changed — not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change ; their might
Exceeds our organs', which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.





THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

BY JOHN KEATS.

ST. AGNES' Eve, — ah, bitter chill it was !
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen
grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :
The sculptured dead on each side seem to freeze,
Imprisoned in black, purgatorial rails :
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor ;
But no — already had his death-bell rung ;
The joys of all his life were said and sung :
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprove,
And all night kept awake, for sinner's sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their head the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their
breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairly
The brain, new-stuffed, in youth, with triumphs
gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,
 And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
 If ceremonies due they did aright ;
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white ;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :
 The music, yearning like a god in pain,
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
 Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by, — she heeded not at all : in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
 And back retired, not cooled by high disdain,
 But she saw not : her heart was otherwhere ;
 She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :
 The hallowed hour was near at hand : she sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport,
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwinked with faery fancy, all amort,
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,

Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen,
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things
 have been.

He ventures in : let no buzzed whisper tell :
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
 For him those chambers held barbarian hordes,
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland :
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, " Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place;
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

" Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ;
 He had a fever late, and in the fit

He curséd thee and thine, both house and land :
 Then there 's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 More tame for his gray hairs, — alas me ! flit !
 Flit like a ghost away.” “ Ah, Gossip dear,
 We 're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,
 And tell me how — ” “ Good Saints ! not here,
 not here :

Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.”

He followed through a lowly archéd way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume ;
 And as she muttered, “ Well-a — well-a-day ! ”
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 “ Now tell me where is Madeline,” said he,
 “ O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously.”

“ St. Agnes ! ah ! it is St. Agnes' Eve, —
 Yet men will murder upon holy days :
 Thou must hold water in a witch 's sieve,
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 To venture so : it fills me with amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro ! — St. Agnes' Eve !
 God 's help ! my lady fair the conjurer plays
 This very night : good angels her deceive !
 But let me laugh awhile, I 've mickle time to grieve ! ”

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,

Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,
 As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
 His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his painéd heart
 Made purple riot : then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
 "A cruel man and impious thou art :
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep and dream
 Alone with her good angels, far apart
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go ! I deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
 Quoth Porphyro : "O may I ne'er find grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face :
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears ;
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
 And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves
 and bears."

"Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,

Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
 Were never missed." Thus plaining, doth she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro,
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
 That Angela gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
 Him in a closet, of such privacy
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
 While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers met,
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

" It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame :
 " All cates and dainties shall be storéd there
 Quickly on this feast-night : by the tambour frame
 Her own lute thou wilt see : no time to spare,
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 Wait here, my child, with patience kneel in prayer
 The while : ah ! thou must needs the lady wed,
 Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly passed ;
 The dame returned, and whispered in his ear
 To follow her, with aged eyes aghast

From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed and chaste ;
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.

His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charméd maid,
 Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware :
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turned, and down the aged gossip led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;

She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died :
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
 No uttered syllable, or woe betide !
 But to her heart her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
 All garlanded with carven imageries
 Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes.
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings.

And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and
 kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
 She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven : — Porphyro grew faint :
 She knelt so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathéd pearls her hair she frees,
 Unclasps her warméd jewels one by one,
 Loosens her fragrant bodice ; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees :
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
 Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
 Her soothéd limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
 Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day,
 Blissfully havened both from joy and pain,

Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray,
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
 And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
 And breathed himself : then from the closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
 And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,
 And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo ! — how fast
 she slept.

Then by the bedside, where the faded moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet : —
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone : —
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanchéd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd,
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon,

Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
 From Fez, and spicéd dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathéd silver: sumptuous they stand
 In the retiréd quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
 “And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes’ sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.”

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervéd arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains: — ‘t was a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as icéd stream:
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
 It seemed he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady’s eyes;
 So mused awhile, entoiled in wooféd fantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
 Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,
 He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
 In Provence called, “La belle dame sans mercy”:—
 Close to her ear touching the melody;—
 Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan:
 He ceased, — she panted quick, — and suddenly

Her blue affrayéd eyes wide open shone :
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
 There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep ;
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
 Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

“ Ah, Porphyro ! ” she said, “ but even now
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
 Made tunable with every sweetest vow ;
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :
 How changed thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear !
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
 O leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.”

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
 Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
 Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose
 Blendeth its odor with the violet, —
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'T is dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
 "This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
 'T is dark : the icéd gusts still rave and beat :
 "No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
 Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ?
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
 Though thou forsakest a deceivéd thing —
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

" My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ?
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil-dyed ?
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 After so many hours of toil and quest,
 A famished pilgrim, — saved by miracle.
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
 Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

" Hark ! 't is an elfin storm from faery land,
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :
 Arise — arise ! the morning is at hand ; —
 The bloated wassailers will never heed : —
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —
 Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
 Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be,
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,

At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears;
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found,
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horsemen, hawk, and hound,
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall!
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans;

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform:
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.



PARADISE AND THE PERI.

BY THOMAS MOORE.

ONE morn a Peri at the gate
Of Eden stood, disconsolate ;
And as she listened to the springs
Of life within, like music flowing,
And caught the light upon her wings
Through the half-open portal glowing,
She wept to think her recreant race
Should e'er have lost that glorious place !

“ How happy,” exclaimed this child of air,
“ Are the holy Spirits who wander there,
‘ Mid flowers that never shall fade or fall ;
Though mine are the gardens of earth and sea
And the stars themselves have flowers for me,
One blossom of Heaven out-blooms them all.

“ Though sunny the lake of cool Cashmere,
With its plane-tree isle reflected clear,
And sweetly the founts of that valley fall ;
Though bright are the waters of Sing-su-hay,

**And the golden floods that thitherward stray,
Yet — O, 't is only the Blest can say
How the waters of Heaven outshine them all !**

**"Go, wing thy flight from star to star,
From world to luminous world, as far
As the universe spreads its flaming wall :
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
And multiply each through endless years,
One minute of Heaven is worth them all !"**

The glorious angel, who was keeping
The Gates of Light, beheld her weeping ;
And, as he nearer drew and listened
To her sad song, a tear-drop glistened
Within his eyelids, like the spray
From Eden's fountain, when it lies
On the blue flower, which — Brahmins say —
Blooms nowhere but in Paradise.

"Nymph of a fair but erring line,"
Gently he said, "one hope is thine.
'T is written in the Book of Fate,
The Peri yet may be forgiven,
Who brings to this eternal gate
The gift that is most dear to Heaven !
Go, seek it, and redeem thy sin, —
'T is sweet to let the pardoned in."

Rapidly as comets run
To the embraces of the Sun,

Fleeter than the starry brands
 Flung at night from angel hands
 At those dark and daring sprites
 Who would climb the empyreal heights,
 Down the blue vault the Peri flies,
 And, lighted earthward by a glance
 That just then broke from morning's eyes,
 Hung hovering o'er our world's expanse.

But whither shall the Spirit go
 To find this gift for Heaven? — “I know
 The wealth,” she cries, “of every urn
 In which unnumbered rubies burn,
 Beneath the pillars of Chilminar;
 I know where the Isles of Perfume are,
 Many a fathom down in the sea,
 To the south of sun-bright Araby;
 I know, too, where the Genii hid
 The jewelled cup of their King Jamshid,
 With life’s elixir sparkling high, —
 But gifts like these are not for the sky.
 Where was there ever a gem that shone
 Like the steps of Alla’s wonderful throne?
 And the Drops of Life — oh! what would they be
 In the boundless Deep of Eternity?”

While thus she mused, her pinions fanned
 The air of that sweet Indian land,
 Whose air is balm; whose ocean spreads
 O’er coral rocks, and amber beds;
 Whose mountains, pregnant by the beam

Of the warm sun, with diamonds teem ;
 Whose rivulets are like rich brides,
 Lovely, with gold beneath their tides ;
 Whose sandal groves and bowers of spice
 Might be a Peri's Paradise !
 But crimson now her rivers ran
 With human blood, — the smell of death
 Came reeking from those spicy bowers,
 And man, the sacrifice of man,
 Mingled his taint with every breath
 Upwafted from the innocent flowers.
 Land of the Sun ! what foot invades
 Thy pagods and thy pillared shades, —
 Thy cavern shrines, and idol stones,
 Thy monarchs and their thousand thrones ?
 'T is He of Gazna, — fierce in wrath
 He comes, and India's diadems
 Lie scattered in his ruinous path.
 His bloodhounds he adorns with gems,
 Torn from the violated necks
 Of many a young and loved Sultana ;
 Maidens, within their pure zenana,
 Priests in the very fane he slaughters,
 And chokes up with the glittering wrecks
 Of golden shrines the sacred waters !

Downward the Peri turns her gaze,
 And, through the war-field's bloody haze,
 Beholds a youthful warrior stand,
 Alone beside his native river, —
 The red blade broken in his hand,

And the last arrow in his quiver.
 "Live," said the Conqueror, "live to share
 The trophies and the crowns I bear!"
 Silent that youthful warrior stood,—
 Silent he pointed to the flood
 All crimson with his country's blood,
 Then sent his last remaining dart,
 For answer, to the Invader's heart.

False flew the shaft, though pointed well;
 The Tyrant lived, the Hero fell!—
 Yet marked the Peri where he lay,
 And, when the rush of war was past,
 Swiftly descending on a ray
 Of morning light, she caught the last—
 Last glorious drop his heart had shed,
 Before his free-born spirit fled!

"Be this," she cried, as she winged her flight,
 "My welcome gift at the Gates of Light.
 Though foul are the drops that oft distil
 On the field of warfare, blood like this,
 For Liberty shed, so holy is,
 It would not stain the purest rill,
 That sparkles among the Bowers of Bliss!
 O, if there be, on this earthly sphere,
 A boon, an offering Heaven holds dear,
 'T is the last libation Liberty draws
 From the heart that bleeds and breaks in her cause!"

"Sweet," said the angel, as she gave
 The gift into his radiant hand,

“Sweet is our welcome of the brave
Who die thus for their native land.
But see — alas ! — the crystal bar
Of Eden moves not — holier far
Than even this drop the boon must be,
That opes the gates of Heaven for thee !”

Her first fond hope of Eden blighted,
Now among Afric’s lunar mountains,
Far to the south the Peri lighted ;
And sleeked her plumage at the fountains
Of that Egyptian tide — whose birth
Is hidden from the sons of earth
Deep in those solitary woods
Where oft the Genii of the Floods
Dance round the cradle of their Nile,
And hail the new-born giant’s smile.
Thence over Egypt’s palmy groves,
Her grots, and sepulchres of kings,
The exiled Spirit sighing roves ;
And now hangs listening to the doves
In warm Rosetta’s vale, — now loves
To watch the moonlight on the wings
Of the white pelicans that break
The azure calm of Mœris’ lake.
’T was a fair scene, — a land more bright
Never did mortal eye behold !
Who could have thought, that saw this night
Those valleys and their fruits of gold
Basking in Heaven’s serenest light ; —
Those groups of lovely date-trees bending

Languidly their leaf-crowned heads,
 Like youthful maids, when sleep descending
 Warns them to their silken beds ; —
 Those virgin lilies, all the night
 Bathing their beauties in the lake,
 That they may rise more fresh and bright,
 When their beloved Sun 's awake ; —
 Those ruined shrines and towers that seem
 The relics of a splendid dream ;
 Amid whose fairy loneliness
 Naught but the lapwing's cry is heard,
 Naught seen but (when the shadows, flitting
 Fast from the moon, unsheathe its gleam)
 Some purple-winged Sultana sitting
 Upon a column, motionless
 And glittering like an idol bird ! —
 Who could have thought, that there, even there,
 Amid those scenes so still and fair,
 The Demon of the Plague hath cast
 From his hot wing a deadlier blast,
 More mortal far than ever came
 From the red Desert's sands of flame !
 So quick, that every living thing
 Of human shape, touched by his wing,
 Like plants, where the Simoom hath passed,
 At once falls black and withering !
 The sun went down on many a brow.
 Which, full of bloom and freshness then,
 Is rankling in the pest-house now,
 And ne'er will feel that sun again.
 And, oh ! to see the unburied heaps

On which the lonely moonlight sleeps,—
 The very vultures turn away,
 And sicken at so foul a prey !
 Only the fierce hyena stalks
 Throughout the city's desolate walks
 At midnight, and his carnage plies :—
 Woe to the half-dead wretch, who meets
 The glaring of those large blue eyes
 Amid the darkness of the streets !

“ Poor race of men ! ” said the pitying Spirit,
 “ Dearly ye pay for your primal fall, —
 Some flow’rets of Eden ye still inherit,
 But the trail of the Serpent is over them all ! ”

She wept, — the air grew pure and clear
 Around her, as the bright drops ran ;
 For there’s a magic in each tear
 Such kindly Spirits weep for man !

Just then beneath some orange-trees,
 Whose fruit and blossoms in the breeze
 Were wantoning together, free,
 Like age at play with infancy, —
 Beneath that fresh and springing bower,
 Close by the lake, she heard the moan
 Of one who, at this silent hour,
 Had thither stolen to die alone.
 One who in life, where’er he moved,
 Drew after him the hearts of many ;
 Yet now, as though he ne’er were loved,
 Dies here unseen, unwept by any !

None to watch near him, — none to slake
 The fire that in his bosom lies,
 With even a sprinkle from that lake
 Which shines so cool before his eyes.
 No voice, well known through many a day,
 To speak the last, the parting word,
 Which, when all other sounds decay,
 Is still like distant music heard ; —
 That tender farewell on the shore
 Of this rude world, when all is o'er,
 Which cheers the spirit, ere its bark
 Puts off into the unknown Dark.
 Deserted youth ! one thought alone
 Shed joy around his soul in death, —
 That she, whom he for years had known,
 And loved, and might have called his own,
 Was safe from this foul midnight's breath, —
 Safe in her father's princely halls,
 Where the cool airs from fountain falls,
 Freshly perfumed by many a brand
 Of the sweet wood from India's land,
 Were pure as she whose brow they fanned.

 But see, — who yonder comes by stealth,
 This melancholy bower to seek,
 Like a young envoy, sent by Health,
 With rosy gifts upon her cheek ?
 'T is she, — far off, through moonlight dim,
 He knew his own betrothéd bride,
 She, who would rather die with him,
 Than live to gain the world beside ! —

Her arms are round her lover now,
His livid cheek to hers she presses,
And dips, to bind his burning brow,
In the cool lake her loosened tresses.
Ah! once, how little did he think
An hour would come, when he should shrink
With horror from that dear embrace,
Those gentle arms, that were to him
Holy as is the cradling-place
Of Eden's infant cherubim!
And now he yields, — now turns away,
Shuddering as if the venom lay
All in those proffered lips alone, —
Those lips that, then so fearless grown,
Never until that instant came
Near his unasked, or without shame.
“Oh! let me only breathe the air,
The blessed air, that's breathed by thee,
And, whether on its wings it bear
Healing or death, 't is sweet to me!
There, — drink my tears, while yet they fall, —
Would that my bosom's blood were balm,
And, well thou know'st, I'd shed it all,
To give thy brow one minute's calm.
Nay, turn not from me that dear face, —
Am I not thine, — thy own loved bride, —
The one, the chosen one, whose place,
In life or death, is by thy side?
Think'st thou that she, whose only light,
In this dim world, from thee hath shone,
Could bear the long, the cheerless night,

That must be hers when thou art gone ?
 That I can live, and let thee go,
 Who art my life itself? — No, no, —
 When the stem dies, the leaf that grew
 Out of its heart must perish too !
 Then turn to me, my own love, turn,
 Before, like thee, I fade and burn ;
 Cling to these yet cool lips, and share
 The last pure life that lingers there ! ”
 She fails, — she sinks, — as dies the lamp
 In charnel airs, or cavern-damp,
 So quickly do his baleful sighs
 Quench all the sweet light of her eyes.
 One struggle, — and his pain is past, —
 Her lover is no longer living !
 One kiss the maiden gives, one last,
 Long kiss, which she expires in giving !

“ Sleep,” said the Peri, as softly she stole
 The farewell sigh of that vanishing soul,
 As true as e’er warmed a woman’s breast, —
 “ Sleep on, in visions of odorous rest,
 In balmier airs than ever yet stirred
 The enchanted pile of that lonely bird,
 Who sings at the last his own death-lay,
 And in music and perfume dies away ! ”
 Thus saying, from her lips she spread
 Unearthly breathings through the place,
 And shook her sparkling wreath, and shed
 Such lustre o’er each paly face,
 That like two lovely saints they seemed,

Upon the eve of doomsday taken
From their dim graves, in odor sleeping
While that benevolent Peri beamed
Like their good angel, calmly keeping
Watch o'er them till their souls would waken.

But morn is blushing in the sky ;
Again the Peri soars above,
Bearing to Heaven that precious sigh
Of pure, self-sacrificing love.
High throbbed her heart, with hope elate,
The Elysian palm she soon shall win,
For the bright Spirit at the gate
Smiled as she gave that offering in ;
And she already hears the trees
Of Eden, with their crystal bells
Ringing in that ambrosial breeze
That from the throne of Alla swells ;
And she can see the starry bowls
That lie around that lucid lake,
Upon whose banks admitted souls
Their first sweet draught of glory take !

But, ah ! even Peris' hopes are vain, —
Again the Fates forbade, again
The immortal barrier closed, — "Not yet,"
The angel said, as, with regret,
He shut from her that glimpse of glory, —
"True was the maiden, and her story,
Written in light o'er Alla's head,
By seraph eyes shall long be read.

But, Peri, see, — the crystal bar
 Of Eden moves not, — holier far
 Than even this sigh the boon must be
 That opes the gates of Heaven for thee.”

Now, upon Syria’s land of roses
 Softly the light of eve reposes,
 And, like a glory, the broad sun
 Hangs over sainted Lebanon ;
 Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
 And whitens with eternal sleet,
 While summer, in a vale of flowers,
 Is sleeping rosy at his feet.

To one who looked from upper air
 O’er all the enchanted regions there,
 How beauteous must have been the glow,
 The life, the sparkling from below !
 Fair gardens, shining streams, with ranks
 Of golden melons on their banks,
 More golden where the sunlight falls ; —
 Gay lizards glittering on the walls
 Of ruined shrines, busy and bright
 As they were all alive with light ;
 And, yet more splendid, numerous flocks
 Of pigeons, settling on the rocks,
 With their rich restless wings, that gleam
 Variously in the crimson beam
 Of the warm West, — as if inlaid
 With brilliants from the mine, or made
 Of tearless rainbows, such as span

The unclouded skies of Peristan.
 And then the mingling sounds that come,
 Of shepherd's ancient reed, with hum
 Of the wild bees of Palestine,

Banqueting through the flowery vales :
 And, Jordan, those sweet banks of thine,
 And woods, so full of nightingales.

But naught can charm the luckless Peri :
 Her soul is sad, her wings are weary, —
 Joyless she sees the Sun look down
 On that great temple, once his own,
 Whose lonely columns stand sublime,

Flinging their shadows from on high,
 Like dials, which the wizard, Time,
 Had raised to count his ages by !

Yet haply there may lie concealed,
 Beneath those chambers of the sun,
 Some amulet of gems, annealed
 In upper fires, some tablet sealed
 With the great name of Solomon,
 Which, spelled by her illumined eyes,
 May teach her where, beneath the moon,
 In earth or ocean, lies the boon,
 The charm that can restore so soon
 An erring spirit to the skies.

Cheered by this hope she bends her thither ; —
 Still laughs the radiant eye of Heaven,
 Nor have the golden bowers of Even
 In the rich West begun to wither ; —

When, o'er the vale of Baalbec winging
Slowly, she sees a child at play,
Among the rosy wild-flowers singing,
As rosy and as wild as they ;
Chasing, with eager hands and eyes,
The beautiful blue damsel-flies,
That fluttered round the jasmine stems,
Like wingéd flowers or flying gems : —
And, near the boy, who tired with play
Now nestling 'mid the roses lay,
She saw a wearied man dismount
From his hot steed, and on the brink
Of a small imaret's rustic fount
Impatient fling him down to drink.
Then swift his haggard brow he turned
To the fair child, who fearless sat,
Though never yet hath day-beam burned
Upon a brow more fierce than that, —
Sullenly fierce, — a mixture dire,
Like thunder-clouds, of gloom and fire ;
In which the Peri's eye could read
Dark tales of many a ruthless deed ;
The ruined maid, — the shrine profaned, —
Oaths broken, — and the threshold stained
With blood of guests ! — *there* written, all,
Black as the damning drops that fall
From the denouncing angel's pen,
Ere Mercy weeps them out again.

Yet tranquil now that man of crime
(As if the balmy evening time

Softened his spirit) looked and lay,
 Watching the rosy infant's play :
 Though still, whene'er his eye by chance
 Fell on the boy, its lurid glance

Met that unclouded, joyous gaze,
 As torches, that have burnt all night
 Through some impure and godless rite,
 Encounter morning's glorious rays.

But, hark ! the vesper call to prayer,
 As slow the orb of daylight sets,
 Is rising sweetly on the air,
 From Syria's thousand minarets.

The boy has started from the bed
 Of flowers where he had laid his head,
 And down upon the fragrant sod
 Kneels with his forehead to the south,
 Lispings the eternal name of God

From Purity's own cherub mouth,
 And looking, while his hands and eyes
 Are lifted to the glowing skies,
 Like a stray babe of Paradise,
 Just lighted on that flowery plain,
 And seeking for its home again.

Oh ! 't was a sight — that Heaven — that child —
 A scene, which might have well beguiled
 Even haughty Eblis of a sigh
 For glories lost and peace gone by !

And how felt *he*, the wretched man
 Reclining there, — while memory ran

O'er many a year of guilt and strife,
 Flew o'er the dark flood of his life,
 Nor found one sunny resting-place,
 Nor brought him back one branch of grace ?
 "There *was* a time," he said, in mild,
 Heart-humbled tones, — "thou blessed child !
 When, young and haply pure as thou,
 I looked and prayed like thee, — but now — "
 He hung his head, — each nobler aim,
 And hope, and feeling, which had slept
 From boyhood's hour, that instant came
 Fresh o'er him, and he wept, — he wept !

Blest tears of soul-felt penitence !
 In whose benign, redeeming flow
 Is felt the first, the only sense
 Of guiltless joy that guilt can know.

"There's a drop," said the Peri, "that down from the
 moon
 Falls through the withering airs of June
 Upon Egypt's land, of so healing a power,
 So balmy a virtue, that even in the hour
 That drop descends, contagion dies,
 And health reanimates earth and skies ! —
 O, is it not thus, thou man of sin,
 The precious tears of repentance fall ?
 Though foul thy fiery plagues within,
 One heavenly drop hath dispelled them all."

And now, — behold him kneeling there
 By the child's side, in humble prayer,

While the same sunbeam shines upon
 The guilty and the guiltless one,
 And hymns of joy proclaim through Heaven
 The triumph of a soul forgiven !

'T was when the golden orb had set,
 While on their knees they lingered yet,
 There fell a light more lovely far
 Than ever came from sun or star,
 Upon the tear that, warm and meek,
 Dewed that repentant sinner's cheek.
 To mortal eye this light might seem
 A northern flash or meteor beam,—
 But well the enraptured Peri knew
 'T was a bright smile the angel threw
 From Heaven's gate, to hail that tear
 Her harbinger of glory near !

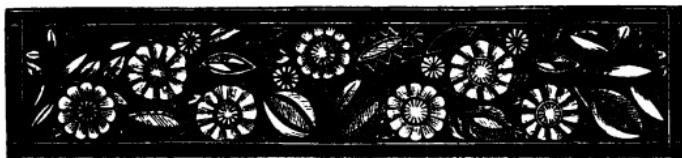
"Joy, joy forever ! my task is done,—
 The gates are passed, and Heaven is won.
 Oh ! am I not happy ? I am, I am,—
 To thee, sweet Eden ! how dark and sad
 Are the diamond turrets of Shadukiam,
 And the fragrant bowers of Amberabad !

"Farewell, ye odors of Earth, that die,
 Passing away like a lover's sigh ; —
 My feast is now of the tooba-tree,
 Whose scent is the breath of Eternity !

"Farewell, ye vanishing flowers, that shone
 In my fairy wreath, so bright and brief ; —

Oh ! what are the brightest that e'er have blown,
To the lote-tree, springing by Alla's throne,
Whose flowers have a soul in every leaf.
Joy, joy forever ! — my task is done, —
The gates are passed, and Heaven is won ! ”





THE RAVEN.

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE.

NCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered,
weak and weary,

Over many a quaint and curious volume of for-
gotten lore,—

While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a
tapping,

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber-
door.

“ ‘T is some visitor,’ I muttered, “ tapping at my cham-
ber-door,—

Only this, and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon
the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow; vainly I had sought to
borrow

From my books surcease of sorrow,— sorrow for the
lost Lenore,—

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore,—

Nameless here forevermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain,
Thrilled me,—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
“ ‘T is some visitor, entreating entrance at my chamber-door,—
Some late visitor, entreating entrance at my chamber-door;
That it is, and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger: hesitating then no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is, I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber-door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide the door;
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there, wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word,
“Lenore!”

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word,
“Lenore !”

Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me
burning,

Soon again I heard a tapping, something louder than
before.

“Surely,” said I, “surely that is something at my win-
dow lattice ;

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery
explore, —

Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery
explore ; —

‘T is the wind, and nothing more.’

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt
and flutter,

In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of
yore.

Not the least obeisance made he ; not a minute stopped
or stayed he ;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my cham-
ber-door, —

Perched upon a bust of Pallas, just above my chamber-
door, —

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it
wore,

"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said,
 "art sure no craven;
 Ghastly, grim, and ancient raven, wandering from the
 nightly shore,
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the night's Plutonian
 shore?"

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore!"

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so
 plainly,

Though its answer little meaning, little relevancy bore;
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
 Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber-
 door,—

Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber-
 door,

With such name as "Nevermore!"

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did
 outpour.

Nothing further then he uttered,—not a feather then he
 fluttered,—

Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have
 flown before,—

On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown
 before."

Then the bird said, "Nevermore!"

Startled at the stillness, broken by reply so aptly spoken,
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and
 store,

Caught from some unhappy master, whom unmerciful
disaster
Followed fast and followed faster, till his songs one bur-
den bore, —
Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore,
Of Never — Nevermore ! ”

But the raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and
bust and door.

Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of
yore, —

What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous
bird of yore,
Meant in croaking “ Nevermore ! ”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl, whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s
core;

This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease re-
clining

On the cushion’s velvet lining that the lamplight gloated
o’er :

But whose velvet violet lining, with the lamplight gloat-
ing o’er,

She shall press, — ah ! nevermore !

Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed from an
unseen censer

Swung by seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted
floor.

“ Wretch,” I cried, “ thy God hath lent thee, — by these
 angels he hath sent thee
 Respite, — respite and nepenthe from thy memories of
 Lenore !
 Quaff, O quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget the lost
 Lenore ! ”

Quoth the raven, “ Nevermore ! ”

“ Prophet ! ” said I, “ thing of evil ! — prophet still, if
 bird or devil !
 Whether tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee
 here ashore,
 Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land en-
 chanted,
 On this home by Horror haunted, — tell me truly, I im-
 plore, —
 Is there, — is there balm in Gilead ? — tell me, — tell me,
 I implore ! ”

Quoth the raven, “ Nevermore ! ”

“ Prophet ! ” said I, “ thing of evil ! — prophet still, if
 bird or devil !
 By that heaven that bends above us, — by that God we
 both adore,
 Tell this soul, with sorrow laden, if, within the distant
 Aidenn,
 It shall clasp a sainted maiden, whom the angels name
 Lenore, —
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden, whom the angels name
 Lenore ! ”

Quoth the raven, “ Nevermore ! ”

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I
shrieked, upstarting, —

"Get thee back into the tempest and the night's Pluto-
nian shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath
spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken! — quit the bust above
my door!

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from
off my door!"

Quoth the raven, "Nevermore!"

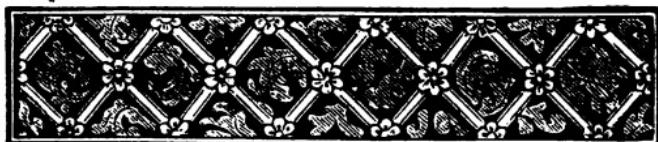
And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber-door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is
dreaming,

And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow
on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on
the floor

Shall be lifted — nevermore!





THE SKELETON IN ARMOR.

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

SPEAK ! speak ! thou fearful guest !
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armor drest,
Comest to daunt me !
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me ? ”

Then, from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
Gleam in December ;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
From the heart's chamber.

“ I was a Viking old !
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
No Saga taught thee !

Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse;
For this I sought thee.

"Far in the Northern Land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
Tamed the gerfalcon;
And, with my skates fast bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf's bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

"But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair's crew,
O'er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

“ Many a wassail-bout
 Wore the long winter out ;
 Often our midnight shout
 Set the cocks crowing,
 As we the Berserk’s tale
 Measured in cups of ale,
 Draining the open pail,
 Filled to o’erflowing.

“ Once as I told in glee
 Tales of the stormy sea,
 Soft eyes did gaze on me,
 Burning yet tender ;
 And as the white stars shine
 On the dark Norway pine,
 On that dark heart of mine
 Fell their soft splendor.

“ I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
 Yielding, yet half afraid,
 And in the forest’s shade
 Our vows were plighted.
 Under its loosened vest
 Fluttered her little breast,
 Like birds within their nest
 By the hawk frightened.

“ Bright in her father’s hall
 Shields gleamed upon the wall,
 Loud sang the minstrels all,
 Chanting his glory ;

When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
To hear my story.

“ While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
Blew the foam lightly.

“ She was a Prince's child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded !
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight,
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded ?

“ Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen !—
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his arméd hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

“ Then launched they to the blast,
 Bent like a reed each mast,
 Yet we were gaining fast,
 When the wind failed us ;
 And with a sudden flaw
 Came round the gusty Skaw,
 So that our foe we saw
 Laugh as he hailed us.

“ And as to catch the gale
 Round veered the flapping sail,
 Death ! was the helmsman’s hail,
 Death without quarter !
 Midships with iron keel
 Struck we her ribs of steel ;
 Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water !

“ As with his wings aslant,
 Sails the fierce cormorant,
 Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden,
 So toward the open main,
 Beating to sea again,
 Through the wild hurricane,
 Bore I the maiden.

“ Three weeks we westward bore,
 And when the storm was o’er,
 Cloud-like we saw the shore
 Stretching to leeward ;

There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

" There lived we many years ;
Time dried the maiden's tears :
She had forgot her fears,
She was a mother :
Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies ;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another !

" Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen !
Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hateful !
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
O, death was grateful !

" Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars,
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended !
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal ! to the Northland ! *skoal !*"
Thus the tale ended.



THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

BY THOMAS HOOD.

I.

SOME dreams we have are nothing else but dreams
 Unnatural and full of contradictions ;
Yet others of our most romantic schemes
 Are something more than fictions.

It might be only on enchanted ground ;
 It might be merely by a thought's expansion ;
But in the spirit, or the flesh, I found
 An old deserted mansion.

A residence for woman, child, and man,
 A dwelling-place, — and yet no habitation ;
A house, — but under some prodigious ban
 Of excommunication.

Unhinged, the iron gates half open hung,
 Jarred by the gusty gales of many winters,

That from its crumbled pedestal had flung
One marble globe in splinters.

No dog was at the threshold, great or small ;
No pigeon on the roof, — no household creature, —
No cat demurely dozing on the wall, —
Not one domestic feature.

No human figure stirred, to go or come ;
No face looked forth from shut or open casement ;
No chimney smoked, — there was no sign of home
From parapet to basement.

With shattered panes the grassy court was starred ;
The time-worn coping-stone had tumbled after ;
And through the ragged roof the sky shone, barred
With naked beam and rafter.

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear ;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted !

The flower grew wild and rankly as the weed,
Roses with thistles struggled for espial,
And vagrant plants of parasitic breed
Had overgrown the dial.

But gay or gloomy, steadfast or infirm,
No heart was there to heed the hour's duration ;
All times and tides were lost in one long term
Of stagnant desolation.

The wren had built within the porch, she found
Its quiet loneliness so sure and thorough;
And on the lawn, within its turf mound,
The rabbit made his burrow,—

The rabbit wild and gray, that flitted through
The shrubby clumps, and frisked, and sat, and vanished,
But leisurely and bold, as if he knew
His enemy was banished.

The wary crow, the pheasant from the woods,
Lulled by the still and everlasting sameness,
Close to the mansion, like domestic broods,
Fed with a “shocking tameness.”

The coot was swimming in the reedy pond,
Beside the water-hen, so soon affrighted;
And in the weedy moat the heron, fond
Of solitude, alighted,—

The moping heron, motionless and stiff,
That on a stone, as silently and stilly,
Stood, an apparent sentinel, as if
To guard the water-lily.

No sound was heard, except, from far away,
The ringing of the whitewall's shrilly laughter,
Or, now and then, the chatter of the jay,
That Echo murmured after.

But Echo never mocked the human tongue;
Some weighty crime, that Heaven could not pardon,

A secret curse on that old building hung,
And its deserted garden.

The beds were all untouched by hand or tool;
No footstep marked the damp and mossy gravel,
Each walk as green as is the mantled pool,
For want of human travel.

The vine unpruned, and the neglected peach,
Dropped from the wall with which they used to grapple;
And on the cankered tree, in easy reach,
Rotted the golden apple.

But awfully the truant shunned the ground,
The vagrant kept aloof, and daring poacher,
In spite of gaps that through the fences round
Invited the encroacher.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

The pear and quince lay squandered on the grass;
The mould was purple with unheeded showers
Of bloomy plums, — a wilderness it was
Of fruits and weeds and flowers.

The marigold amidst the nettles blew,
The gourd embraced the rose-bush in its ramble,

The thistle and the stock together grew,
The hollyhock and bramble.

The bear-bine with the lilac interlaced,
The sturdy burdock choked its slender neighbor,
The spicy pink. All tokens were effaced
Of human care and labor.

The very yew Formality had trained
To such a rigid pyramidal stature,
For want of trimming had almost regained
The raggedness of nature.

The fountain was a-dry, — neglect and time
Had marred the work of artisan and mason,
And efts and croaking frogs, begot of slime,
Sprawled in the ruined basin.

The statue, fallen from its marble base,
Amidst the refuse leaves and herbage rotten,
Lay like the idol of some bygone race,
Its name and rites forgotten.

On every side the aspect was the same,
All ruined, desolate, forlorn, and savage :
No hand or foot within the precinct came,
To rectify or ravage.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted !

II.

O, **very** gloomy is the house of woe,
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,
With all the dark solemnities which show
That Death is in the dwelling !

O, very, very dreary is the room
Where Love, domestic Love, no longer nestles,
But, smitten by the common stroke of doom,
The corpse lies on the trestles !

But house of woe, and hearse, and sable pall,
The narrow home of the departed mortal,
Ne'er looked so gloomy as that ghostly hall,
With its deserted portal.

The centipede along the threshold crept,
The cobweb hung across in mazy tangle,
And in its winding-sheet the maggot slept,
At every nook and angle.

The keyhole lodged the earwig and her brood,
The emmets of the steps had old possession,
And marched in search of their diurnal food
In undisturbed procession, —

As undisturbed as the prehensile cell
Of moth or maggot, or the spider's tissue ;
For never foot upon that threshold fell,
To enter or to issue.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted !

Howbeit, the door I pushed, — or so I dreamed, —
Which slowly, slowly gaped, the hinges creaking
With such a rusty eloquence, it seemed
That Time himself was speaking.

But Time was dumb within that mansion old,
Or left his tale to the heraldic banners
That hung from the corroded walls and told
Of former men and manners.

Those tattered flags, that with the open door
Seemed the old wave of battle to remember,
While fallen fragments danced upon the floor
Like dead leaves in December.

The startled bats flew out, bird after bird ;
The screech-owl overhead began to flutter,
And seemed to mock the cry that she had heard
Some dying victim utter, —

A shriek that echoed from the joisted roof,
And up the stair, and further still and further,
Till in some ringing chamber far aloof
It ceased its tale of murther !

Meanwhile the rusty armor rattled round,
The banner shuddered, and the ragged streamer ;

All things the horrid tenor of the sound
Acknowledged with a tremor.

The antlers, where the helmet hung, and belt,
Stirred as the tempest stirs the forest branches,
Or as the stag had trembled when he felt
The bloodhound at his haunches.

The window jingled in its crumbled frame,
And through its many gaps of destitution
Dolorous moans and hollow sighings came,
Like those of dissolution.

The wood-louse dropped, and rolled into a ball,
Touched by some impulse occult or mechanic;
And nameless beetles ran along the wall
In universal panic.

The subtle spider, that from overhead
Hung like a spy on human guilt and error,
Turned suddenly, and up its slender thread
Ran with a nimble terror.

The very stains and fractures on the wall,
Assuming features solemn and terrific,
Hinted some tragedy of that old hall,
Locked up in hieroglyphic, —

Some tale that might, perchance, have solved the doubt
Wherefore, among those flags so dull and livid,
The banner of the Bloody Hand shone out
So ominously vivid, —

Some key to that inscrutable appeal
 Which made the very frame of Nature quiver,
 And every thrilling nerve and fibre feel
 So ague-like a shiver.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
 A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
 And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
 The place is haunted !

If but a rat had lingered in the house,
 To lure the thought into a social channel !
 But not a rat remained, or tiny mouse,
 To squeak behind the panel.

Huge drops rolled down the walls, as if they wept ;
 And, where the cricket used to chirp so shrilly,
 The toad was squatting, and the lizard crept
 On that damp hearth and chilly.

For years no cheerful blaze had sparkled there,
 Or glanced on coat of buff or knightly metal ;
 The slug was crawling on the vacant chair,
 The snail upon the settle.

The floor was redolent of mould and must,
 The fungus in the rotten seams had quickened ;
 While on the oaken table coats of dust
 Perennially had thickened.

No mark of leathern jack or metal can,
 No cup, no horn, — no hospitable token, —

All social ties between that board and man
Had long ago been broken.

There was so foul a rumor in the air,
The shadow of a presence so atrocious,
No human creature could have feasted there,
Even the most ferocious.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

III.

'T is hard for human actions to account,
Whether from reason or from impulse only;
But some internal prompting bade me mount—
Those gloomy stairs and lonely, —

Those gloomy stairs, so dark, and damp, and cold,
With odors as from bones and relics carnal,
Deprived of rite, and consecrated mould,
The chapel vault, or charnel.

Those dreary stairs, where with the sounding stress
Of every step so many echoes blended,
The mind, with dark misgivings, feared to guess
How many feet ascended.

The tempest with its spoils had drifted in,
Till each unwholesome stone was darkly spotted,

As thickly as the leopard's dappled skin,
With leaves that rankly rotted.

The air was thick ; and in the upper gloom
The bat, or something in its shape, was winging ;
And on the wall, as chilly as a tomb,
The death's-head moth was clinging, —

That mystic moth, which, with a sense profound
Of all unholy presence, augurs truly,
And with a grim significance flits round
The taper burning bluely.

Such omens in the place there seemed to be,
At every crooked turn, or on the landing,
The straining eyeball was prepared to see
Some apparition standing.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted !

Yet no portentous shape the sight amazed ;
Each object plain, and tangible, and valid ;
But from their tarnished frames dark figures gazed,
And faces spectre-pallid, —

Not merely with the mimic life that lies
Within the compass of art's simulation ;
Their souls were looking through their painted eyes
With awful speculation.

On every lip a speechless horror dwelt;
On every brow the burthen of affliction;
The old ancestral spirits knew and felt
The house's malediction.

Such earnest woe their features overcast,
They might have stirred, or sighed, or wept, or spoken;
But, save the hollow moaning of the blast,
The stillness was unbroken.

No other sound or stir of life was there,
Except my steps in solitary clamber,
From flight to flight, from humid stair to stair,
From chamber into chamber, —

Deserted rooms of luxury and state,
That old magnificence had richly furnished
With pictures, cabinets of ancient date,
And carvings gilt and burnished, —

Rich hangings, storied by the needle's art
With scripture history, or classic fable;
But all had faded, save one ragged part,
Where Cain was slaying Abel.

The silent waste of mildew and the moth
Had marred the tissue with a partial ravage;
But undecaying frowned upon the cloth
Each feature stern and savage.

The sky was pale; the cloud a thing of doubt;
Some hues were fresh, and some decayed and duller;

But still the Bloody Hand shone strangely out
With vehemence of color.

The Bloody Hand that with a lurid stain
Shone on the dusty floor, a dismal token,
Projected from the casement's painted pane,
Where all beside was broken,—

The Bloody Hand, significant of crime,
That, glaring on the old heraldic banner,
Had kept its crimson unimpaired by time,
In such a wondrous manner.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted !

The death-watch ticked behind the panelled oak,
Inexplicable tremors shook the arras,
And echoes strange and mystical awoke,
The fancy to embarrass, —

Prophetic hints that filled the soul with dread,
But through one gloomy entrance pointing mostly,
The while some secret inspiration said,
That chamber is the ghostly !

Across the door no gossamer festoon
Swung pendulous, no web, no dusty fringes,
No silky chrysalis or white cocoon
About its nooks and hinges.

The spider shunned the interdicted room,
The moth, the beetle, and the fly were banished,
And where the sunbeam fell athwart the gloom
The very midge had vanished.

One lonely ray that glanced upon a bed,
As if with awful aim direct and certain,
To show the Bloody Hand in burning red
Embroidered on the curtain.

And yet no gory stain was on the quilt ;
The pillow in its place had slowly rotted ;
The floor alone retained the trace of guilt,
Those boards obscurely spotted, —

Obscurely spotted to the door, and thence,
With mazy doubles, to the grated casement, —
O, what a tale they told of fear intense,
Of horror and amazement !

What human creature in the dead of night
Had coursed like hunted hare that cruel distance ?
Had sought the door, the window, in his flight,
Striving for dear existence ?

What shrieking spirit in that bloody room
Its mortal frame had violently quitted ? —
Across the sunbeam, with a sudden gloom,
A ghostly shadow flitted, —

Across the sunbeam, and along the wall,
But painted on the air so very dimly

It hardly veiled the tapestry at all,
Or portrait frowning grimly.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted !





THE WRITING ON THE IMAGE.

BY WILLIAM MORRIS.

N half-forgotten days of old,
As by our fathers we were told,
Within the town of Rome there stood
An image cut of cornel-wood,
And on the upraised hand of it
Men might behold these letters writ :
“ **PERCUTE HIC**,” — which is to say,
In that tongue that we speak to-day,
Strike here! nor yet did any know
The cause why this was written so.

Thus in the middle of the square,
In the hot sun and summer air,
The snow-drift and the driving rain,
That image stood, with little pain,
For twice a hundred years and ten;
While many a band of striving men
Were driven betwixt woe and mirth
Swiftly across the weary earth,

From nothing unto dark nothing ;
 And many an emperor and king,
 Passing with glory or with shame,
 Left little record of his name,
 And no remembrance of the face
 Once watched with awe for gifts or grace.

Fear little, then, I counsel you,
 What any son of man can do ;
 Because a log of wood will last
 While many a life of man goes past,
 And all is over in short space.

Now so it chanced that to this place
 There came a man of Sicily,
 Who, when the image he did see,
 Knew full well who, in days of yore,
 Had set it there ; for much strange lore,
 In Egypt and in Babylon,
 This man with painful toil had won ;
 And many secret things could do ;
 So verily full well he knew
 That master of all sorcery
 Who wrought the thing in days gone by,
 And doubted not that some great spell
 It guarded, but could nowise tell
 What it might be. So, day by day,
 Still would he loiter on the way,
 And watch the image carefully,
 Well mocked of many a passer-by.

And on a day he stood and gazed
 Upon the slender finger, raised
 Against a doubtful cloudy sky,

Nigh noontide; and thought, "Certainly
The master who made thee so fair
By wondrous art, had not stopped there,
But made thee speak, had he not thought
That thereby evil might be brought
Upon his spell." But as he spoke,
From out a cloud the noon sun broke,
With watery light and shadows cold:
Then did the Scholar well behold
How, from that finger carved to tell
Those words, a short black shadow fell
Upon a certain spot of ground,
And thereon, looking all around
And seeing none heeding, went straightway
Whereas the finger's shadow lay,
And with his knife about the place
A little circle did he trace;
Then home he turned with throbbing head,
And forthright got him to his bed,
And slept until the night was late
And few men stirred from gate to gate.

So when at midnight he did wake,
Pickaxe and shovel did he take,
And, going to that now silent square,
He found the mark his knife made there,
And quietly with many a stroke
The pavement of the place he broke:
And so, the stones being set apart,
He 'gan to dig with beating heart,
And from the hole in haste he cast
The marl and gravel; till at last,

Full shoulder high, his arms were jarred,
For suddenly his spade struck hard
With clang against some metal thing ;
And soon he found a brazen ring,
All green with rust, twisted, and great
As a man's wrist, set in a plate
Of copper, wrought all curiously
With words unknown, though plain to see,
Spite of the rust, and flowering trees,
And beasts, and wicked images,
Whereat he shuddered ; for he knew
What ill things he might come to do,
If he should still take part with these
And that Great Master strive to please.

But small time had he then to stand
And think, so straight he set his hand
Unto the ring, but where he thought
That by main strength it must be brought
From out its place, lo ! easily
It came away, and let him see
A winding staircase wrought of stone,
Wherethrough the new-come wind did moan.

Then thought he, " If I come alive
From out this place, well shall I thrive,
For I may look here certainly
The treasures of a king to see,
A mightier man than men are now.
So in few days what man shall know
The needy Scholar, seeing me
Great in the place where great men be,
The richest man in all the land ?

Beside the best I then shall stand,
 And some unheard-of palace have ;
 And if my soul I may not save
 In heaven, yet here in all men's eyes
 Will I make some sweet paradise,
 With marble cloisters, and with trees,
 And bubbling wells, and fantasies,
 And things all men deem strange and rare,
 And crowds of women kind and fair,
 That I may see, if so I please,
 Laid on the flowers, or 'mid the trees
 With half-clad bodies wandering.
 There, dwelling happier than the king,
 What lovely days may yet be mine !
 How shall I live with love, and wine,
 And music, till I come to die !
 And then — Who knoweth certainly
 What haps to us when we are dead ?
 Truly, I think by likelihead
 Naught haps to us of good or bad ;
 Therefore on earth will I be glad
 A short space, free from hope or fear ;
 And fearless will I enter here
 And meet my fate, whatso it be.”

Now on his back a bag had he,
 To bear what treasure he might win,
 And therewith now did he begin
 To go adown the winding stair ;
 And found the walls all painted fair
 With images of many a thing,

Warrior and priest, and queen and king,
But nothing knew what they might be.
Which things full clearly could he see,
For lamps were hung up here and there
Of strange device, but wrought right fair,
And pleasant savor came from them.

At last a curtain, on whose hem
Unknown words in red gold were writ,
He reached, and, softly raising it,
Stepped back, for now did he behold
A goodly hall hung round with gold,
And at the upper end could see,
Sitting, a glorious company;
Therefore he trembled, thinking well
They were no men, but fiends of hell.
But while he waited, trembling sore,
And doubtful of his late-learned lore,
A cold blast of the outer air
Blew out the lamps upon the stair,
And all was dark behind him; then
Did he fear less to face those men
Than, turning round, to leave them there.
While he went groping up the stair.
Yea, since he heard no cry or call,
Or any speech from them at all,
He doubted they were images
Set there some dying king to please
By that Great Master of the art;
Therefore at last with stouter heart
He raised the cloth and entered in,
In hope that happy life to win,

And drawing nigher did behold
That these were bodies dead and cold,
Attired in full royal guise,
And wrought by art in such a wise
That living they all seemed to be,
Whose very eyes he well could see,
That now beheld not foul or fair,
Shining as though alive they were.
And midmost of that company
An ancient king that man could see,
A mighty man, whose beard of gray
A foot over his gold gown lay ;
And next beside him sat his queen,
Who in a flowery gown of green
And golden mantle well was clad,
And on her neck a collar had
Too heavy for her dainty breast ;
Her loins by such a belt were pressed,
That whoso in his treasury
Held that alone, a king might be.
On either side of these a lord
Stood heedfully before the board,
And in their hands held bread and wine
For service ; behind these did shine
The armor of the guards, and then
The well-attired serving-men ;
The minstrels clad in raiment meet ;
And over against the royal seat
Was hung a lamp, although no flame
Was burning there, but there was set
Within its open golden fret

A huge carbuncle, red and bright,
 Wherefrom there shone forth such a light
 That great hall was as clear by it
 As though by wax it had been lit,
 As some great church at Easter-tide.

Now set a little way aside,
 Six paces from the daïs stood
 An image made of brass and wood,
 In likeness of a full-armed knight,
 Who pointed 'gainst the ruddy light
 A huge shaft ready in a bow.

Pondering how he could come to know
 What all these marvellous matters meant,
 About the hall the Scholar went,
 Trembling, though nothing moved as yet ;
 And for a while did he forget
 The longings that had brought him there,
 In wondering at these marvels fair ;
 And still for fear he doubted much
 One jewel of their robes to touch.

But as about the hall he passed,
 He grew more used to them at last,
 And thought, " Swiftly the time goes by,
 And now no doubt the day draws nigh,
 Folk will be stirring ; by my head,
 A fool I am to fear the dead,
 Who have seen living things enow,
 Whose very names no man can know,
 Whose shapes brave men might well affright
 More than the lion in the night

Wandering for food": therewith he drew
Unto those royal corpses two,
That on dead brows still wore the crown,
And midst the golden cups set down
The rugged wallet from his back,
Patched of strong leather, brown and black.
Then, opening wide its mouth, took up
From off the board a golden cup
The king's dead hand was laid upon,
Whose unmoved eyes upon him shone,
And recked no more of that last shame
Than if he were the beggar lame
Who in old days was wont to wait
For a dog's meal beside the gate.
Of which shame naught our man didreck,
But laid his hand upon the neck
Of the slim queen, and thence undid
The jewelled collar, that straight slid
Down her smooth bosom to the board.
And when these matters he had stored
Safe in his sack, with both their crowns,
The jewelled parts of their rich gowns,
Their shoes and belts, brooches and rings,
And cleared the board of all rich things,
He staggered with them down the hall.
But as he went his eyes did fall
Upon a wonderful green stone,
Upon the hall-floor laid alone;
He said, "Though thou art not so great
To add by much unto the weight
Of this my sack, indeed, yet thou,

Certes, would make me rich enow,
That verily with thee I might
Wage one half of the world to fight
The other half of it, and I
The lord of all the world might die ; —
I will not leave thee " : therewithal
He knelt down midmost of the hall,
Thinking it would come easily
Into his hand : but when that he
Gat hold of it, full fast it stack,
So fuming, down he laid his sack,
And with both hands pulled lustily,
But as he strained, he cast his eye
Unto the daïs, and saw there
The image who the great bow bare
Moving the bow-string to his ear ;
So, shrieking out aloud for fear,
Of that rich stone he loosed his hold,
And, catching up his bag of gold,
Gat to his feet : but ere he stood,
The evil thing of brass and wood
Up to his ear the notches drew,
And clanging forth the arrow flew,
And midmost of the carbuncle
Clanging again, the forked barbs fell,
And all was dark as pitch straightway.

So there until the judgment day
Shall come and find his bones laid low,
And raise them up for weal or woe,
This man must bide ; cast down he lay,

While all his past life day by day
In one short moment he could see
Drawn out before him, while that he
In terror by that fatal stone
Was laid, and scarcely daréd to moan.
But in a while his hope returned,
And then, though nothing he discerned,
He gat him up upon his feet,
And all about the walls he beat
To find some token of the door,
But never could he find it more,
For by some dreadful sorcery
All was sealed close as it might be,
And midst the marvels of that hall
This Scholar found the end of all.

But in the town on that same night,
An hour before the dawn of light,
Such storm upon the place there fell,
That not the oldest man could tell
Of such another : and thereby
The image was burned utterly,
Being stricken from the clouds above ;
And folk deemed that same bolt did move
The pavement where that wretched one
Unto his foredoomed fate had gone,
Because the plate was set again
Into its place, and the great rain
Washed the earth down, and sorcery
Had hid the place where it did lie.

So, soon the stones were set all straight,

But yet the folk, afraid of fate,
Where once the man of cornel-wood
Through many a year of bad and good
Had kept his place, set up alone
Great Jove himself, cut in white stone,
But thickly overlaid with gold.
“Which,” saith my tale, “you may behold
Unto this day, although indeed
Some lord or other, being in need,
Took every ounce of gold away.”

But now, this tale in some past day
Being writ, I warrant all is gone,
Both gold and weather-beaten stone.





TAM O'SHANTER.

BY ROBERT BURNS.

THEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate ;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,*
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam O'Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam ! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice !
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,†

* Ale.

† Worthless fellow.

A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum ; *
 That frae November till October,
 Ae market-day thou was nae sober ;
 That ilka melder, † wi' the miller,
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;
 That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on ;
 That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton ‡ Jean till Monday.
 She prophesied that, late or soon,
 Thou would be found deep drowned in Doon ;
 Or catched wi' warlocks i' the mirk,
 By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames ! it gars me greet, §
 To think how mony counsels sweet,
 How mony lengthened, sage advices,
 The husband frae the wife despises !

But to our tale : Ae market night,
 Tam had got planted unco right ;
 Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
 Wi' reaming swats, || that drank divinely ;
 And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
 His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony ;
 Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither ;
 They had been fou for weeks thegither.

* Idle talker.

† Every time that corn was sent to be ground.

‡ Kirkton is the distinctive name of a village in which the parish kirk stands.

§ Makes me weep.

|| Frothing ale.

The night drove on wi' sangs and clatter;
 And ay the ale was growing better :
 The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
 Wi' favors, secret, sweet, and precious :
 The souter * tauld his queerest stories ;
 The landlord's laugh was ready chorus :
 The storm without might rair and rustle,
 Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
 E'en drowned himself amang the nappy !
 As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
 The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure :
 Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
 O'er a' the ills o' life victorious !

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
 You seize the flower, its bloom is shed ;
 Or like the snow falls in the river,
 A moment white, — then melts forever ;
 Or like the borealis race,
 That flit ere you can point their place ;
 Or like the rainbow's lovely form
 Evanishing amid the storm.
 Nae man can tether time or tide ; —
 The hour approaches Tam maun ride ;
 That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
 That dreary hour he mounts his beast in ;
 And sic a night he taks the road in,
 As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.
 The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last ;

* Shoemaker.

The rattling showers rose on the blast ;
 The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed ;
 Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed ;
 That night, a child might understand,
 The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
 A better never lifted leg,
 Tam skelpit * on through dub and mire,
 Despising wind and rain and fire ;
 Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet ;
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet ;
 Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
 Lest bogles catch him unawares ;
 Kirk Alloway was drawing nigh,
 Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was 'cross the ford,
 Whare in the snaw the chapman smoored ; †
 And past the birks ‡ and meikle stane,
 Whare drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane ;
 And through the whins, and by the cairn,
 Whare hunters fand the murdered bairn ;
 And near the thorn, aboon the well,
 Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
 Before him Doon pours all his floods ;
 The doubling storm roars through the woods ;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole ;
 Near and more near the thunders roll :
 When, glimmering through the groaning trees,

* Went at a smart pace.

† Smothered.

‡ Birches.

Kirk Alloway seemed in a breeze ;
 Through ilka bore * the beams were glancing ;
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn !
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn !
 Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil ;
 Wi' usquebae, we 'll face the Devil !
 The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.
 But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
 Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
 She ventured forward on the light ;
 And, wow ! Tam saw an unco sight !
 Warlocks and witches in a dance ;
 Nae cotillon brent new frae France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 At winnock-bunker † in the east,
 There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast ;
 A towzie ‡ tyke, black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge :
 He screwed the pipes and gart them skirl, §
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl, —
 Coffins stood round, like open presses,
 That shawed the dead in their last dresses ;
 And by some devilish cantrip || slight
 Each in its cauld hand held a light, —

* Hole in the wall.

† Window-seat

‡ Shaggy.

§ Scream.

|| Magic.

By which heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly table,
 A murderer's banes in gibbet airns ;
 Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns ;
 A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape ;
 Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted ;
 Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted ;
 A garter which a babe had strangled ;
 A knife a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
 The gray hairs yet stack to the heft ;
 Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
 Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowered, amazed and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious :
 The piper loud and louder blew ;
 The dancers quick and quicker flew ;
 They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleikit,
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
 And coost her duddies * to the wark,
 And linket † at it in her sark !

Now Tam, O Tam ! had thae been queans
 A' plump and strapping in their teens ;
 Their sarks, instead o' creeshie ‡ flannen,
 Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linen !
 Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
 That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,

* Clothes.

‡ Greasy.

† Tripped along.

I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,*
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies !

But withered beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags, wad spean a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a crummock, †
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,
"There was ae winsome wench and walie,"
That night enlisted in the core
(Lang after kend on Carrick shore ;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perished mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear, ‡
And kept the country-side in fear),
Her cutty § sark, o' Paisley harn, ||
That, while a lassie, she had worn,
In longitude though sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie. —
Ah ! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft ¶ for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('t was a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance of witches !

But here my muse her wing maun cour ;
Sic flights are far beyond her power ;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was, and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitched,

* Loins.

† Short staff.

‡ Barley.

§ Short.

|| Very coarse linen.

¶ Bought.

And thought his very e'en enriched ;
 Even Satan glowered, and fidgeted fu' fain,
 And hotched and blew wi' might and main :
 Till first ae caper, syne * anither,
 Tam tint † his reason a' thegither,
 And roars out, " Weel done, Cutty-sark ! "
 And in an instant all was dark ;
 And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
 When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,‡
 When plundering herds assail their byke ; §
 As open pussie's mortal foes,
 When, pop ! she starts before their nose ;
 As eager runs the market-crowd,
 When " Catch the thief ! " resounds aloud ;
 So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
 Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, Tam ! ah, Tam ! thou 'll get thy fairin' !
 In hell they 'll roast thee like a herrin !
 In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin' !
 Kate soon will be a woefu' woman !
 Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
 And win the key-stane || of the brig ;
 There at them thou thy tail may toss,
 A running stream they dare na cross.
 But ere the key-stane she could make,

* Then.

† Lost.

‡ Bustle.

§ Hive.

|| Witches and evil spirits have no power to follow one any farther than the middle of the next running stream.

The fient a tail she had to shake !
 For Nannie, far before the rest,
 Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
 And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle ; *
 But little wist she Maggie's mettle,
 Ae spring brought off her master hale,
 But left behind her ain gray tail :
 The carlin clauth her by the rump,
 And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
 Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed ;
 Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
 Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
 Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
 Remember Tam O'Shanter's mare.

* Effort.





THE FORGING OF THE ANCHOR.

BY SAMUEL FERGUSON.

COME, see the Dolphin's anchor forged! 't is at
a white heat now;
The bellows ceased, the flames decreased;
though, on the forge's brow
The little flames still fitfully play through the sable mound,
And fitfully you still may see the grim smiths ranking
round;
All clad in leatheren panoply, their broad hands only bare,
Some rest upon their sledges here, some work the wind-
lass there.

The windlass strains the tackle-chains, — the black mould
heaves below,
And red and deep, a hundred veins burst out at every throe.
It rises, roars, rends all outright, — O Vulcan! what a
glow!
'T is blinding white, 't is blasting bright, — the high sun
shines not so!
The high sun sees not, on the earth, such fiery, fearful
show!

The roof-ribs swarth, the cendent hearth, the ruddy lurid row
Of smiths, that stand, an ardent band, like men before
the foe !

As quivering through his fleece of flame, the sailing mon-
ster slow

Sinks on the anvil, — all about, the faces fiery grow.

“ Hurrah ! ” they shout, “ leap out, leap out ! ” Bang,
bang ! the sledges go ;

Hurrah ! the jetted lightnings are hissing high and low ;
A hailing fount of fire is struck at every squashing blow ;
The leathern mail rebounds the hail ; the rattling cinders
strow

The ground around ; at every bound the sweltering foun-
tains flow ;

And, thick and loud, the swinking crowd at every stroke
pant “ ho ! ”

Leap out, leap out, my masters ! leap out and lay on load !
Let’s forge a goodly anchor, — a bower thick and broad ;
For a heart of oak is hanging on every blow, I bode ;
And I see the good ship riding, all in a perilous road ;
The low reef roaring on her lee ; the roll of ocean poured
From stem to stern, sea after sea, the mainmast by the
board ;

The bulwarks down ; the rudder gone ; the boats stove
at the chains ;

But courage still, brave mariners, — the bower yet re-
mains !

And not an inch to flinch he deigns, — save when ye
pitch sky high ;

Then moves his head, as though he said, “ Fear nothing,
— here am I ! ”

Swing in your strokes in order ! let foot and hand keep
time ;
Your blows make music sweeter far than any steeple's
chime.
But while ye swing your sledges, sing ; and let the
burden be,
The anchor is the anvil-king, and royal craftsmen we !
Strike in, strike in ! — the sparks begin to dull their
rustling red ;
Our hammers ring with sharper din, — our work will
soon be sped ;
Our anchor soon must change his bed of fiery rich
array
For a hammock at the roaring bows, or an oozy couch of
clay ;
Our anchor soon must change the lay of merry craftsmen
here
For the yeo-heave-o, and the heave-away, and the sighing
seamen's cheer,
When, weighing slow, at eve they go, far, far from love
and home ;
And sobbing sweethearts, in a row, wail o'er the ocean
foam.

In livid and obdurate gloom, he darkens down at last ;
A shapely one he is, and strong, as e'er from eat was
cast.
O trusted and trustworthy guard ! if thou hadst life like
me,
What pleasures would thy toils reward beneath the deep
green sea !

O deep-sea diver, who might then behold such sights as thou ?

The hoary monster's palaces ! — methinks what joy 't were now

To go plumb-plunging down, amid the assembly of the whales,

And feel the churned sea round me boil beneath their scourging tails !

Then deep in tangle-woods to fight the fierce sea-unicorn,
And send him foiled and bellowing back, for all his ivory horn ;

To leave the subtle sworder-fish of bony blade forlorn ;
And for the ghastly-grinning shark, to laugh his jaws to scorn ;

To leap down on the kraken's back, where 'mid Norwegian isles

He lies, a lubber anchorage for sudden shallowed miles,
Till, snorting like an under-sea volcano, off he rolls ;
Meanwhile to swing a-buffeting the far astonished shoals
Of his back-browsing ocean-calves ; or, haply, in a cove
Shell-strown, and consecrate of old to some Undine's love,
To find the long-haired mermaidens ; or, hard by icy lands,
To wrestle with the sea-serpent, upon cerulean sands.

O broad-armed fisher of the deep ! whose sports can equal thine ?

The Dolphin weighs a thousand tons that tugs thy cable line ;

And night by night 't is thy delight, thy glory day by day,
Through sable sea and breaker white the giant game to play.

But, shamer of our little sports, forgive the name I gave ;
 A fisher's joy is to destroy, — thine office is to save.
 A lodger in the sea-king's halls ! couldst thou but under-
 stand

Whose be the white bones by their side, — or who that
 dripping band,
 Slow swaying in the heaving wave, that round about thee
 bend,
 With sounds like breakers in a dream blessing their
 ancient friend !
 O, couldst thou know what heroes glide with larger steps
 round thee,
 Thine iron side would swell with pride, — thou 'dst leap
 within the sea !

Give honor to their memories who left the pleasant strand
 To shed their blood so freely for the love of fatherland,
 Who left their chance of quiet age and grassy church-
 yard grave

So freely, for a restless bed amid the tossing wave !
 O, though our anchor may not be all I have fondly sung,
 Honor him for their memory whose bones he goes among !





MORTE D'ARTHUR.

BY ALFRED TENNYSON.

SO all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonness about their lord,
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
“ The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep, — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made,—
 Though Merlin sware that I should come again
 To rule once more, — but let what will be, be,
 I am so deeply smitten through the helm
 That without help I cannot last till morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
 Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
 In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 Holding the sword,— and how I rowed across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known:
 But now delay not: take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle mere:
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.”

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
 “ It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
 Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.”

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept
 And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
 By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :
For all the haft twinkled with diamond studs,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw : but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
“ Hast thou performed my mission which I gave ?
What is it thou hast seen or what hast heard ? ”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
“ I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.”

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :
“ Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.”

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought ;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud :

“ And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done ?
What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself ?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt ? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, ‘ King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.’
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost.”

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded king.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :
“ What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ? ”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 " I heard the water lapping on the crag,
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
 To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :
 " Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !
 Authority forgets a dying king,
 Laid widowed of the power in his eye
 That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
 For thou, the latest left of all my knights,
 In whom should meet the offices of all,
 Thou wouldest betray me for the precious hilt ;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
 And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,
 And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
 Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
 And flashing round and round, and whirled in an
 arch,
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
 Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
 By night, with noises of the northern sea.
 So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur :
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
 " Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
 Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
 " Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
 Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
 But when I looked again, behold an arm,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
 " My end draws nigh ; 't is time that I were gone.
 Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
 And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
 My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
 Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
 And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
 As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
 Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
 And would have spoken, but he found not words,
 Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
 O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
 And rising bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick !
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of arméd heels, —
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream, — by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold, — and from them
rose

A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parched with dust ;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the King :
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
“ Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light hath led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world ;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,

And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge :
 " The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done
 May He within himself make pure ! but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
 For what are men better than sheep or goats
 That nourish a blind life within the brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
 Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?
 For so the whole round earth is every way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long way
 With these thou seest, — if indeed I go, —
 (For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
 To the island-valley of Avilion ;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
 Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan, —
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,

Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.





HORATIUS.

BY THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

PARS PORSENA of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.

By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting-day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain

From many a stately market-place,
 From many a fruitful plain ;
 From many a lonely hamlet,
 Which, hid by beech and pine,
 Like an eagle's nest hangs on the crest
 Of purple Apennine ;

From lordly Volaterræ,
 Where scowls the far-famed hold
 Piled by the hands of giants,
 For god-like kings of old ;
 From sea-girt Populonia,
 Whose sentinels descry
 Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
 Fringing the southern sky ;

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
 Queen of the western waves,
 Where ride Massilia's triremes
 Heavy with fair-haired slaves ;
 From where sweet Clanis wanders
 Through corn and vines and flowers ;
 From where Cortona lifts to heaven
 Her diadem of towers.

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
 Drop in dark Auser's rill ;
 Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
 Of the Ciminian hill ;
 Beyond all streams Clitumnus
 Is to the herdsman dear ;

Best of all pools the fowler loves
The great Volsinian mere.

But now no stroke of woodman
Is heard by Auser's rill ;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path,
Up the Ciminian hill ;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer ;
Unharmed the water-fowl may dip
In the Volsinian mere.

The harvests of Arretium
This year old men shall reap ;
This year young boys in Umbro
Shall plunge the struggling sheep ;
And in the vats of Luna,
This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

There be thirty chosen prophets,
The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
Both morn and evening stand :
Evening and morn the Thirty
Have turned the verses o'er,
Traced from the right on linen white
By mighty seers of yore.

And with one voice the Thirty
Have their glad answer given :

“ Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena,
 Go forth, beloved of Heaven ;
 Go, and return in glory
 To Clusium’s royal dome,
 And hang round Nurscia’s altars
 The golden shields of Rome.”

And now hath every city
 Sent up her tale of men :
 The foot are fourscore thousand,
 The horse are thousands ten.
 Before the gates of Sutrium
 Is met the great array,
 A proud man was Lars Porsena
 Upon the trysting-day.

For all the Etruscan armies
 Were ranged beneath his eye,
 And many a banished Roman,
 And many a stout ally ;
 And with a mighty following
 To join the muster came
 The Tuseulan Mamilius,
 Prince of the Latian name.

But by the yellow Tiber
 Was tumult and affright :
 From all the spacious champaign
 To Rome men took their flight.
 A mile around the city,
 The throng stopped up the ways :

A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days,

For aged folk on crutches,
And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sun-burned husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves,

And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of wagons
That creaked beneath their weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate.

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay.

To eastward and to westward
Have spread the Tuscan bands ;

Nor house nor fence nor dovecote
 In Crustumierum stands.
 Verbenna down to Ostia
 Hath wasted all the plain ;
 Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
 And the stout guards are slain.

I wis, in all the Senate,
 There was no heart so bold,
 But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
 When that ill news was told.
 Forthwith up rose the Consul,
 Up rose the Fathers all ;
 In haste they girded up their gowns,
 And hied them to the wall.

They held a council standing
 Before the river-gate :
 Short time was there, ye well may guess,
 For musing or debate.
 Out spoke the Consul roundly :
 “ The bridge must straight go down ;
 For, since Janiculum is lost,
 Naught else can save the town.”

Just then a scout came flying,
 All wild with haste and fear :
 “ To arms ! to arms ! Sir Consul ;
 Lars Porsena is here.”
 On the low hills to westward.
 The Consul fixed his eye,

And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

And nearer fast and nearer
Doth the red whirlwind come ;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
The trampling and the hum.

And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

And plainly and more plainly,
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine ;
But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.
There Cilius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen ;

And Astur of the fourfold shield,
 Girt with the brand none else may wield ;
 Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
 And dark Verbenna from the hold
 By ready Thrasymene.

Fast by the royal standard,
 O'erlooking all the war,
 Lars Porsena of Clusium
 Sate in his ivory car.
 By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
 Prince of the Latian name ;
 And by the left false Sextus,
 That wrought the deed of shame.

But when the face of Sextus
 Was seen among the foes,
 A yell that rent the firmament
 From all the town arose.
 On the house-tops was no woman
 But spate towards him and hissed ;
 No child but screamed out curses,
 And shook its little fist.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
 And the Consul's speech was low,
 And darkly looked he at the wall,
 And darkly at the foe.
 "Their van will be upon us
 Before the bridge goes down ;
 And if they once may win the bridge
 What hope to save the town ? "

Then out spake brave Horatius,

The captain of the gate :

" To every man upon this earth

Death cometh soon or late.

And how can man die better

Than facing fearful odds,

For the ashes of his fathers,

And the temples of his gods,

" And for the tender mother

Who dandled him to rest,

And for the wife who nurses

His baby at her breast,

And for the holy maidens

Who feed the eternal flame,

To save them from false Sextus

That wrought the deed of shame ?

" Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,

With all the speed ye may ;

I, with two more to help me,

Will hold the foe in play.

In yon strait path a thousand

May well be stopped by three.

Now, who will stand on either hand,

And keep the bridge with me ? "

Then out spake Spurius Lartius,

A Ramnian proud was he :

" Lo, I will stand on thy right hand,

And keep the bridge with thee."

And out spake strong Herminius,
 Of Titian blood was he :
 " I will abide on thy left side,
 And keep the bridge with thee."

" Horatius," quoth the Consul,
 " As thou sayest, so let it be."
 And straight against that great array
 Forth went the dauntless Three.
 For Romans in Rome's quarrel
 Spared neither land nor gold,
 Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
 In the brave days of old.

Then none was for a party ;
 Then all were for the state ;
 Then the great man helped the poor,
 And the poor man loved the great ;
 Then lands were fairly portioned ;
 Then spoils were fairly sold :
 The Romans were like brothers
 In the brave days of old.

Now Roman is to Roman
 More hateful than a foe,
 And the Tribunes beard the high,
 And the Fathers grind the low.
 As we wax hot in faction,
 In battle we wax cold ;
 Wherefore men fight not as they fought
 In the brave days of old.

Now, while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an axe ;
And Fathers mixed with Commons,
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly toward the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose :
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that mighty mass ;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow pass ;

Aunus, from green Tifernum,
 Lord of the Hill of Vines ;
 And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
 Sicken in Ilva's mines ;
 And Picus, long to Clusium
 Vassal in peace and war,
 Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
 From that gray crag where, girt with towers,
 The fortress of Nequinum lowers
 O'er the pale waves of Nar.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
 Into the stream beneath ;
 Herminius struck at Seius,
 And clove him to the teeth ;
 At Picus brave Horatius
 Darted one fiery thrust,
 And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
 Clashed in the bloody dust.

Then Ocnus of Falerii
 Rushed on the Roman Three ;
 And Lausulus of Urgo,
 The rover of the sea ;
 And Aruns of Volsinium,
 Who slew the great wild boar,
 The great wild-boar that had his den
 Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
 And wasted fields and slaughtered men
 Along Albinia's shore.

Herminius smote down Aruns ;
 Lartius laid Ocnus low :
 Right to the heart of Lausulus
 Horatius sent a blow.
 "Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate !
 No more, aghast and pale,
 From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
 The track of thy destroying bark.
 No more Campania's hinds shall fly
 To woods and caverns when they spy
 Thy thrice accursed sail ! "

But now no sound of laughter
 Was heard among the foes.
 A wild and wrathful clamor
 From all the vanguard rose.
 Six spears' length from the entrance
 Halted that mighty mass,
 And for a space no man came forth
 To win the narrow pass.

But, hark ! the cry is Astur :
 And lo ! the ranks divide ;
 And the great lord of Luna
 Comes with his stately stride.
 Upon his ample shoulders
 Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
 And in his hand he shakes the brand
 Which none but he can wield.

He smiled on those bold Romans
 A smile serene and high ;

He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
 And scorn was in his eye.
 Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter
 Stand savagely at bay :
 But will ye dare to follow,
 If Astur clears the way ?"

Then, whirling up his broadsword
 With both hands to the height,
 He rushed against Horatius,
 And smote with all his might.
 With shield and blade Horatius
 Right deftly turned the blow.
 The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh ;
 It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh :
 The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
 To see the red blood flow.

He reeled, and on Herminius
 He leaned one breathing-space ;
 Then, like a wild-cat mad with wounds,
 Sprang right at Astur's face.
 Through teeth and skull and helmet
 So fierce a thrust he sped,
 The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
 Behind the Tuscan's head.

And the great lord of Luna
 Fell at that deadly stroke,
 As falls on Mount Alvernus
 A thunder-smitten oak.

Far o'er the crashing forest
 The giant arms lie spread ;
 And the pale augurs, muttering low,
 Gaze on the blasted head.

On Astur's throat Horatius
 Right firmly pressed his heel,
 And thrice and four times tugged amain,
 Ere he wrenched out the steel.
 "And see," he cried, "the welcome,
 Fair guests, that waits you here !
 What noble Lucumo comes next
 To taste our Roman cheer ?"

But at his haughty challenge
 A sullen murmur ran,
 Mingled of wrath and shame and dread,
 Along that glittering van.
 There lacked not men of prowess,
 Nor men of lordly race ;
 For all Etruria's noblest
 Were round the fatal place.

But all Etruria's noblest
 Felt their hearts sink to see
 On the earth the bloody corpses,
 In the path the dauntless Three :
 And, from the ghastly entrance
 Where those bold Romans stood,
 All shrank, like boys who, unaware,
 Ranging the woods to start a hare,
 Come to the mouth of the dark lair

Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.

Was none who would be foremost
To lead such dire attack ;
But those behind cried " Forward ! "
And those before cried " Back ! "
And backward now and forward
Wavers the deep array ;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel ;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
Dies fitfully away.

Yet one man for one moment
Strode out before the crowd ;
Well known was he to all the Three,
And they gave him greeting loud.
" Now welcome, welcome, Sextus !
Now welcome to thy home !
Why dost thou stay and turn away ?
Here lies the road to Rome."

Thrice looked he on the city ;
Thrice looked he on the dead ;
And thrice came on in fury,
And thrice turned back in dread :
And, white with fear and hatred,
Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
The bravest Tuscans lay.

But meanwhile axe and lever
 Have manfully been plied ;
 And now the bridge hangs tottering
 Above the boiling tide.
 " Come back, come back, Horatius ! "
 Loud cried the Fathers all ;
 " Back, Lartius ! back, Herminius !
 Back, ere the ruin fall ! "

Back darted Spurius Lartius ;
 Herminius darted back :
 And, as they passed, beneath their feet
 They felt the timbers crack.
 But when they turned their faces,
 And on the farther shore
 Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
 They would have crossed once more ;

But with a crash like thunder
 Fell every loosened beam,
 And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
 Lay right athwart the stream :
 And a long shout of triumph
 Rose from the walls of Rome,
 As to the highest turret-tops
 Was splashed the yellow foam.

And like a horse unbroken
 When first he feels the rein,
 The furious river struggled hard,
 And tossed his tawny mane,

And burst the curb, and bounded,
 Rejoicing to be free ;
 And whirling down, in fierce career,
 Battlement and plank and pier,
 Rushed headlong to the sea.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
 But constant still in mind ;
 Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
 And the broad flood behind.
 “ Down with him ! ” cried false Sextus,
 With a smile on his pale face ;
 “ Now yield thee,” cried Lars Porsena,
 “ Now yield thee to our grace.”

Round turned he, as not deigning
 Those craven ranks to see ;
 Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
 To Sextus naught spake he ;
 But he saw on Palatinus
 The white porch of his home ;
 And he spake to the noble river
 That rolls by the towers of Rome :

“ O Tiber ! Father Tiber !
 To whom the Romans pray,
 A Roman’s life, a Roman’s arms,
 Take thou in charge this day ! ”
 So he spake, and, speaking, sheathéd
 The good sword by his side,
 And, with his harness on his back,
 Plunged headlong in the tide.

No sound of joy or sorrow
 Was heard from either bank ;
 But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
 With parted lips and straining eyes,
 Stood gazing where he sank ;
 And when above the surges
 They saw his crest appear,
 All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
 And even the ranks of Tuscany
 Could scarce forbear to cheer.

But fiercely ran the current,
 Swollen high by months of rain :
 And fast his blood was flowing ;
 And he was sore in pain,
 And heavy with his armor,
 And spent with changing blows ;
 And oft they thought him sinking,
 But still again he rose.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
 In such an evil case,
 Struggle through such a raging flood
 Safe to the landing-place :
 But his limbs were borne up bravely
 By the brave heart within,
 And our good Father Tiber
 Bare bravely up his chin.

“ Curse on him ! ” quoth false Sextus,
 “ Will not the villain drown ?

But for this stay, ere close of day
 We should have sacked the town!"
 "Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
 "And bring him safe to shore;
 For such a gallant feat of arms
 Was never seen before."

And now he feels the bottom;
 Now on dry earth he stands;
 Now round him throng the Fathers
 To press his gory hands;
 And now, with shouts and clapping,
 And noise of weeping loud,
 He enters through the river-gate,
 Borne by the joyous crowd.

They gave him of the corn-land,
 That was of public right,
 As much as two strong oxen
 Could plough from morn till night;
 And they made a molten image,
 And set it up on high,—
 And there it stands unto this day
 To witness if I lie.

It stands in the Comitium,
 Plain for all folk to see:
 Horatius in his harness,
 Halting upon one knee;
 And underneath is written,
 In letters all of gold,

How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home ;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.

And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north-winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow ;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within ;

When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit,
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
And the kid turns on the spit ;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close ;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows ;

When the goodman mends his armor,
And trims his helmet's plume ;

When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom ;
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.



